

Hafa Adai!

Nicholson allays concerns on impacts of upcoming exercises. **PAGE 3**

Mayor's Animal Shelter welcomes youth volunteers. **PAGE 5**

\$1

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\$50K: price tag for special prosecutor against Torres

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Torres

The special prosecutor the Office of the Attorney General had hired to prosecute former governor Ralph DLG Torres in June comes with a price tag of \$50,000. In addition, the contract for the services of James Robert Kingman from Texas includes a nearly \$2,000 plane ticket.

These details were learned after Victorino Torres, who is one of the lawyers of Ralph Torres, filed an Open Government Act request with the Office of the Attorney General to see a copy of the contract between the OAG and Kingman.

Kingman was hired last month to assist in the prosecution of the criminal case against Ralph Torres, whose

See \$50K on Page 4

Senate OKs budget revision, with changes

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Senate unanimously adopted yesterday morning the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's proposed changes in the House of



Manglona

Representatives' bill that would revise the budget law for the CNMI government's operations for fiscal year 2023.

With all nine senators voting "yes" during a special session, House Bill 23-31, House Substitute 1, Senate Substitute 1, as amended, passed the Senate. The bill back to the House for adop-

See BUDGET on Page 4

Ex-DOC officer pleads guilty to bribery

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

A former Department of Corrections officer who is being accused of bribery has pleaded guilty to charges in the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

Ex-DOC officer Rainier Deleon Guerrero has plead-

See BRIBERY on Page 4

Military exercises from the tropics to tundra

By KEVIN KNODELL
THE HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER

For Capt. Caleb Friel, who spent his teenage years on the Big Island before joining the Army, the snow is a new challenge as he trains soldiers in Alaska for potential combat operations.

"I think a few years that I spent growing up in Tennessee at Fort Campbell when I was

See MILITARY on Page 4

SITE VISIT

Martha Guzman, left, regional administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 9), together with other senior EPA dignitaries, are briefed during a tour of the Sadog Tasi wastewater treatment plant. Guzman requested the site visit to recognize the extraordinary work and efforts of the operators, who have worked wonders to keep the wastewater treatment plant running considering difficult circumstances. EPA commends the new management in place and is happy with the great progress in all areas.

cuc



'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN

Days until 'touchback rule' takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:

172

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Yadokari Kitchen is the only home of the savory Japanese pancakes, okonomiyaki, on Saipan.

PAGE 11



NATION

Former President Donald Trump's response to criminal charges against him revives his lies.

PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE

Throughout her career, Ellie Goulding has been candid about the drawbacks of fame.

PAGE 15



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Local

Cultural practices in monument area move council to allow sale of fish

By MARK LADAO
THE HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER

The initial system gave subsistence fishers—those with a Native Hawaiian Subsistence Practices Fishing Permit—the ability to sell up to \$15,000 worth of fish caught in the area to recoup fuel, food, bait and other costs of that fishing trip.

The Western Pacific fishing council has stuck with its decision to allow the sale of some fish caught in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument expansion area, arguing that more access to fishing both in Hawaii and around the Pacific region helps perpetuate cultural practices.

During its 194th meeting last week, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, or Wespac, amended its recently established permitting system that in the monument expansion area, or MEA, which is protected from commercial fishing.

The initial system gave subsistence fishers—those with a Native Hawaiian Subsistence Practices Fishing Permit—the ability to sell up to \$15,000 worth of fish caught in the area

to recoup fuel, food, bait and other costs of that fishing trip.

It was a controversial move that some said opens the door for commercial fishing in waters where it is banned and conservation is prioritized.

Last week the council voted 9-2 to amend the permitting system by removing the \$15,000 cap, and recommended in its place a system in which permittees can request NOAA to allow them to recover the costs of the trip by selling the fish they caught on the trip.

Despite the amendments, Wespac decided to keep permitted fishers' ability to sell fish at all, arguing that it will encourage Native Hawaiian cultural practices in the monument waters, which surround the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

"In American Samoa, our culture spends a lot of money to try to keep our culture alive," said Will Sword, one of Wespac's vice chairs, during the meeting. "If Hawaii wants to keep its culture alive ... you have to think of these things, even when it comes to fishing. It's not making money, it's not commercial, it's actually just

recovering your costs so you can perpetuate your culture."

Sword is a noncommercial fisher in American Samoa and manager and engineer for Pacific Energy South West Pacific.

In its recommendation, Wespac said, "Native Hawaiians are at the top of several socio-economic indicators including the highest rates of poverty, unemployment, negative health conditions. ... A decision to disallow cost recovery, including sales, will continue to disenfranchise the Native Hawaiian community."

Last week's vote is unsurprising, and was likely held only because the council received a letter from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration advising it to remove the sale of fish.

NOAA is in the process of designating Papahānaumokuākea as a national marine sanctuary, and it told the council in the Feb. 22 letter that including the ability to sell fish caught in the monument is inconsistent with the purposes of a sanctuary.

Nicole LeBoeuf, assistant administrator for ocean serv

ices and coastal zone management, in the letter said that any "permit system would need to include sufficient safeguards to ensure that the resources harvested do not enter commerce."

While it accepts recommendations from councils like Wespac, NOAA has the final authority on implementing regulations in sanctuaries, and the council was warned that its letter all but guaranteed that it would reject the allowance of fish sales.

Even council member David Sakoda, commercial fisheries program manager for the state Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Aquatic Resources, said keeping the sale of fish would be a nonstarter.

"I heard pretty clearly ... that this language would still not be consistent with sanctuary purposes and would likely not be accepted. Then it would be out of the council's hands," Sakoda told the council just before members voted on the action.

Sakoda and fellow council member Shae Kamakaala, who is director of aina protec-

tion with the Hawaiian Islands Land Trust, were the two lone votes against last week's action. They were also the only two members in December to vote against establishing the permitting system in the first place.

Though the council as a whole continues to argue that it's trying to perpetuate Native Hawaiian cultural practices, Sakoda and Kamakaala have repeatedly said that Native Hawaiians did not traditionally use the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands to fish.

"Allowing people that identify and engage in Native Hawaiian practices this opportunity to fish in a way that is truly not grounded in culture or our cultural values ... actually jeopardizes the health and integrity of Native Hawaiians," Kamakaala said just before the council's vote.

Months before Wespac established the permitting system in December, the Papahānaumokuākea Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group also said that Wespac's permitting system protects nonexistent cultural traditions in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

It's no secret, however, that the other council members are concerned not just about Hawaii and its cultural practices, but of those of all the regions covered by Wespac, which include American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Pacific Remote Islands.

"This is going to set a precedent for the other island areas that are possibly facing sanctuary or monument designation, and that's why we're having great difficulty amending the language ... because that would not be upholding the interests of island people," council member Judith Guthertz, a professor of legal studies at the University of Guam, said during the meeting.

Closing the council meeting, Wespac Chair John Gourley of Micronesian Environmental Services said the federal government and environmental groups are taking advantage of the Pacific region and its "politically neutered" communities that, other than Hawaii, don't have voting members in U.S. Congress to represent them.

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Nicholson allays concerns on impacts of upcoming exercises

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saying that they go through an extremely extensive process, Rear Adm. Benjamin Nicholson allayed Friday concerns about cultural and environmental impacts from the upcoming military exercises this summer in the CNMI.

Nicholson, who is the commander of Joint Region Marianas, also affirmed in an interview that the People's Republic of China has been increasing its activities throughout Micronesia and that they are closely watching it.

On the Tinian divert airfield, he said the discovery of World War 2 ammunitions is slowing down the construction work a tad, but the project is moving along.

For the military exercises, Nicholson said they are required to follow a significant set of regulations and they go through an extensive process to ensure that they minimize any impact on the environment.

In addition, Nicholson said, before they do these exercises,

» JRM closely watching China's increasing activity in Micronesia » Tinian divert airfield project moving along, but WW2 ammos slowing down

their people that run the ranges and set up the exercises closely coordinate with the CNMI's Bureau of Military Affairs.

The Joint Region Marianas commander was interviewed shortly after his meeting with Gov. Arnold I. Palacios in the governor's conference room last week. At that meeting, Nicholson and Palacios talked about upcoming military exercises in the CNMI and Palacios' plan to develop military tourism to pivot away from the China tourism market, among other topics.

Nicholson said they emphasize with their military members and their families all the time that they only leave behind their footsteps when they visit any place. Nicholson believes there are military members and their families who are really good environmentalists. "When they go visit a beach, you don't see them leave trash,"

the commander said.

As for China's military threat to Micronesia, Nicholson said they see quite a bit of People's Republic of China's activity throughout the region.

"Things are going on in [the Federated States of Micronesia], Palau, throughout the Marianas. And we keep a very, very close eye on that," he said.

And it's not just China's military movements. Nicholson said there's quite a little bit of other China activity that happens in the region, such as illegal fishing or related to funding.

"Lots of different things are happening in the region. And we keep close attention to that. That continues to increase over time. But we watch that very carefully," he said.

With respect to the Tinian divert airfield project, Nicholson said the runway itself really isn't impacted as it is going to continue to operate.

He said what they are building is a parallel taxiway and a

parking apron, and eventually a fuel storage and a piping system from the port that goes to the fuel storage area.

"That is moving along. It's moving slow because we encountered a few things," he said, like some World War II ammunitions and that slows down the process a little bit.

He said they are, however, working on that and he is confident they will get the project done.

The Tinian divert airfield construction project is composed of two phases—Phase 1 is airfield development and Phase 2 involves a parking apron. Black Micro Corp.

got the contract for \$161.8 million. The target completion date is Oct. 9, 2025.

The divert airfield will allow the U.S. Air Force to use Tinian as an alternative landing site for its planes in case Anderson Air Force Base in Guam is inaccessible due to war or calamities.



Nicholson



MEDEVAC FOR KEIKO

K9 Keiko, a 5-year-old Belgian Malinois drug detection dog from Palau, enjoys some play during a med call with Joint Region Marianas commander Rear Adm. Benjamin Nicholson at the U.S. Naval Base Guam. Keiko is one of eight working dogs provided by the United States to Palau under the Building Partner Capacity Program. Keiko had been working on Palau since 2021, but she was flown to Guam this March for a medical condition that required advanced veterinary care.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Transition Team: DPW lacks proper storage for energy items

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Transition Team for the Department of Public Works has found that DPW's Energy Division lacks proper storage space for energy items slated for distribution.

According to the Transition Team's report, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune* last week, perennial issues concerning timing in/out of personnel on a daily basis also plagues the department.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry, acting DPW secretary Ray N. Yumul said Sunday that he will be meeting with the Energy Division director to discuss the lack of

proper storage space for energy items.

Yumul, who also served as the leader of the Transition Team for DPW, said they will discuss how the energy items are to be distributed throughout the CNMI because it does not do them any good if the items are to be placed in storage.

The Transition Team recommends that a proper storage facility to house energy items for distribution is critically needed to safeguard the inventory.

The report also recommends that the Energy Office's Efficient Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program

should switch to a "fixed" monetary value discount or voucher that a vendor will then claim from the office.

With respect to timing in/out issues, the team recommends that strict adherence on employee attendance be enforced.

The report says the Energy Division is tasked to help reduce importation of petroleum products through efficiency and utilization of local renewable energy sources.

The Energy Division manages federal grants awarded to the CNMI to assist in achieving its stated goals such as Weatherization Assistance Program, the

Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grants and the Energy Efficiency Appliance Rebate Program.



Yumul

» 'Issues concerning personnel's timing in/out plagues the department'

Mafnas posts bail in assault case

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Nanami DLG Mafnas, who is the daughter of Senate president Edith Deleon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and former Department of Public Safety commissioner Ray Mafnas, has posted a \$5,000 bail pursuant to an arrest warrant issued against her.

Mafnas, who is currently facing charges of assault and battery and disturbing the

peace, posted a \$5,000 bail last Friday after the arrest warrant issued against her last week was executed by law enforcement.


Saipan Tribune learned that Mafnas, who remains out of Department of Corrections custody pending further court proceeding, has been ordered to appear before Superior court presiding judge Roberto Naraja to be arraigned on April 24.

According to a previous

Saipan Tribune article, the Superior Court issued last Thursday an arrest warrant for Mafnas, who is accused of assault.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho signed off on the arrest warrant for Mafnas, 26, on charges of disturbing the peace and assault and battery.

The judge imposed a bail of \$5,000 on Mafnas who allegedly assaulted assistant attorney general Keisha Blaise. No additional information on the case has been made available as of press time.



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-23-013

RELOCATION OF EXISTING 0.065 MG MODULAR TANK IN KAGMAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Relocation of Existing 0.065 MG Modular Tank in Kagman, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of furnishing all labor, supervision, equipment and materials for the relocation of an existing water tank within San Vicente Water tank site to the existing Kagman booster pump station site. Work includes, but is not limited to disassembly and relocation of an existing 65,000-gallon modular fiberglass potable water tank; demolition and disposal of existing temporary tank plinth at San Vicente Tank site; construction of tank foundation; installation of relocated tank, piping and appurtenances; and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the us Public Law 117-2 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **120 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **April 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-23-013, Relocation of the Existing 0.065 MG Modular Water Tank in Kagman**", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on May 2, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 19, 2023** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Alley Reyes, Project Engineer via email at alley.reyes@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

DR. DALLAS M. PEAVEY, JR.
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Bill aims to relieve animals of suffering from disease, injury

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House of Representatives floor leader Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) has introduced a bill that aims to relieve animals of unnec-

essary suffering from disease, illness or injury, and provide trained personnel with a painless method for handling the task.

Propst's House Bill 23-34 seeks to establish and authorize the use of drugs and controlled substances for

euthanasia by animal control agencies and humane societies.

Several other representatives co-sponsored the legislation.

The bill proposes to amend the Commonwealth Code to add a new chapter pertaining to animal

control. Under the bill, an animal control agency is designated by a mayor to enforce laws and ordinances regulating the care, control, licensing, or treatment of animals. Such agency may also euthanize or destroy animals and sedate animals prior to euthanasia.

Approved drugs for use must be approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association for use on animals for the purpose of sedating animals prior to euthanasia for use in chemical capture programs.

Controlled substances refer to a drug, substance, or chemical as defined by the Drug Enforcement

Agency and used to anesthetize or euthanize animals using methods in accordance with the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The lawmaker stated in the legislation that Saipan, Rota, and Tinian have local animal control laws focused on dogs, but that these laws lack a uniform, modern process for handling animal euthanasia.

He said people of CNMI have a responsibility to ensure that any method used to euthanize an animal be quick and painless and in accordance with Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals.

CPA implements supervisor evaluations

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has implemented a new policy allowing CPA staff who do the grunt work to evaluate their supervisors.

The CPA board unanimously voted in a previous meeting to implement the supervisor evaluation policy.

According to CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, CPA wants to give employees who do the grunt work a process to evaluate their supervisors in order to hold individuals accountable.

"Instead doing a top-down evaluation, what we're trying to do is do a bottom-up evaluation, giving em-

ployees who come on a day to day—who do the grunt work basically—to evaluate their supervisors," she said.

Since the implementation of the new policy, CPA management has since been tasked to develop a platform in which these evaluations can be done online and anonymously.

"Obviously there's going to be some discomfort, and some issues with being candid when you don't have system where you can do it anonymously. So, we've tasked management with creating an online platform to be able to make those evaluations," said King-Hinds.

"We have been talking about this for a while, since last year. This con-

versation started off last year but there was just a lot going on. So we are now tackling this issue," she added.

King-Hinds clarified that this evaluation is not meant to get people fired, but to help supervisors grow and further develop.

"This is not a tool to put people down or put them out on the street. This is a tool to help them grow, develop, and hold ourselves accountable," she said. "If supervisors get a low evaluation, we're not here to put people down, we're here to grow and develop them and provide them the tools to grow. If they're not fit for the position, then maybe we can put them in an area where they're best suited so that they can feel good about the work they are doing."

MILITARY

From Page 1

younger is about as much exposure to snow as I've had," he admits.

Friel is a member of the 196th Infantry Brigade, the unit the Army has tasked with running training across its new Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center, encompassing ranges in Hawaii and Alaska along with an "exportable" training program that takes place in a different country every year.

This year that country will be Australia.

The most recent Alaska training rotation of JPMRC with 8,000 troops is aimed at members of the Army's newly reorganized 11th Airborne Division, certifying them for potential deployments amid increasing geopolitical tensions across the Pacific. The exercise began March 22 and is slated to wrap up Friday.

Headquartered at Fort Shafter, the 196th has troops spread across the Pacific with two battalions on Oahu, one in Alaska and another on Guam.

Brigade commander Col. Bryan Martin said Native Hawaiian and Chamorro soldiers commonly re-

quest assignments with the unit, which gives many a unique opportunity to return to the islands. Friel, a Kameha meha Schools graduate currently assigned to the unit's Kapolei-based 1st Battalion, said he hasn't been back to Hawaii in years and wanted his children to experience island living and connect with family.

But though some soldiers with the 196th may be stationed closer to their families, they're still away from home often as the Army ramps up its Pacific operations.

Friel said the brigade's mission has evolved significantly since he joined the unit. In the past it focused on training National Guard members and reservists in the Pacific for deployments. But as Pacific tensions heat up, the 196th has become the Army's go-to trainers in the region.

U.S. Army Pacific set up JPMRC in part to offset the cost of moving troops from Hawaii and Alaska to the Army's other large-scale training centers in California and Louisiana. But the Army also hopes that in addition to cutting costs, JPMRC will provide better training—and it's attracting attention from other militaries.

Last year in Hawaii, troops from the Philippines, Thailand and Indo-

nesia trained with Oahu-based 25th Infantry Division troops for their JPMRC rotation. This year in Alaska, Canadian and Italian troops joined the 11th Airborne in the U.S. military's Yukon Training Area, while military observers from Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Chile, Germany, Finland and Norway watched.

Among the visitors was Mongolian Army chief Gen. Bujiinov Amgalanbaatar.

"For the first time in nearly five decades, the Army has committed to and is developing (and) continuing to advance its premier training center for this region," said U.S. Army Pacific commander Gen. Charles Flynn. "This keeps our forces in the region, it allows us to train in the environment and the conditions that we're most likely to operate in (and) it allows us the opportunity to train as a joint force because we're surrounded by joint assets, both here and in Hawaii."

The Army is radically shifting how it trains soldiers in Alaska. In the past, commanders avoided training during the harshest winter conditions. Soldiers joked that the Army "hibernated" during those months. Now commanders are ramping up winter warfare training.

It added that GG allowed Deleon Guerrero to use GG's phone to communicate with Zhang. GG also communicated with Zhang on behalf of Deleon Guerrero, the indictment stated.

"After Zhang delivered methamphetamine and cash to Deleon Guerrero, GG reaped the reward of facilitating the exchange by smoking some of the methamphetamine with Deleon Guerrero" the indictment stated.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Qiu was previously charged in federal court with one count of possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance, methamphetamine, and one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

BUDGET

From Page 1

tion of the new changes bill.

Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) offered a last-minute change to the bill to add two unfunded full-time employees to the Department of Commerce. The senators adopted the amendment and passed the legislation.

Manglona later explained that the major changes in the bill pertained to the reallocation of funds. He pointed out that some of the funds in the House's version of the bill projected revenues beginning May 1, 2023.

However, after Gov. Arnold I. Palacios announced that the work hours of all civil service employees will be reduced starting April 24, 2023, Manglona said the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee took the allocation of those hours between March 1 and April 15 and reallocated that.

Manglona said they also addressed Rota and Tinian's law enforcement personnel to make sure they are

100% funded—just like Saipan law enforcement personnel.

Additionally, he said, they also used gave funds to the Substance Abuse Prevention Program and provided an additional \$200,000 to Medical Referral, in addition to the \$1 million that was identified by the administration.

"Additionally we provided funding to the operations of the Executive Branch as well as two municipalities for the two districts," Manglona said.

Last March 17, the House unanimously passed House Bill 23-31, House Substitute 1, to repeal and reenact the budget law for fiscal year 2023 (Public Law 22-22). House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) is the author of the bill.

Palacios earlier asked the Legislature to revise the fiscal year 2023 budget, noting that just after the first quarter of fiscal year 2023, a large portion of the funds from the American Rescue Plan Act that were available for appropriation in fiscal year 2023 have already been expended and are no longer available for the rest of fiscal year 2023.

\$50K

From Page 1

defense team also includes Matthew Holley, Viola Alepuyo, and Anthony Aguon.

In his OGA request, Victorino Torres asked Attorney General Edward Manibusan to authorize the inspection of documents or to provide him copies of documents related to hiring the special prosecutor. In his response, Manibusan stated that the contract is available for inspection at his office from 8am to 3pm.

According to the agreement between the OAG and Kingsman, which was made available to the defense, the OAG has agreed to pay a \$50,000 retainer's fee for Kingman's services, plus a nearly \$2,000 plane ticket.

Victorino Torres had also sought "any and all" communication relating to compensation, expenses, and costs relating to the retention of Kingman, but Manibusan stated that, according to CNMI law, the communications requested is exempt from public record because it contains legal material related to the pending trial.

Chief Justice Alexandro Castro of the local Supreme Court granted last month the application for King-

man to act as a special prosecutor in Ralph DLG Torres' criminal case in Superior Court. Kingman will work with assistant chief solicitor Robert Glass Jr., and his temporary admission to practice in the CNMI will expire after a year.

According to his application to be allowed to practice law in the CNMI temporarily (called a pro hac vice application), Kingman said he has a long history of prosecutorial experience, including public corruption and white-collar crime. He is admitted to practice and is a member of the bar in good standing in Texas.

Torres has been charged by the OAG with 12 counts of misconduct in public office and one count of theft relating to the issuance of airline tickets for business class, first class, or other premium class travel for himself and/or first lady Diann T. Torres.

The complaint also included theft charges related to the former governor's travel expenses amounting to \$20,000 between April 2018 and May 30, 2019, using public funds.

The case also alleged one count of contempt for failure to appear in compliance with a legislative subpoena.

Torres has denied the charges. The jury trial of the ex-governor is scheduled in June.

BRIBERY

From Page 1

ed guilty to one count of conspiracy to bribe a public official and one count of receiving a bribe by a public official.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona accepted Deleon Guerrero's guilty plea and scheduled his sentencing for Friday, Aug. 18, 2023, at 1:30pm. The court also vacated the scheduled jury trial and ordered that the plea agreement in the case be unsealed.

Deleon Guerrero remains released pending sentencing.

Court documents state that Deleon Guerrero was charged after allegedly receiving methamphetamine and

\$500 cash in exchange for smuggling a cell phone into prison.

According to the indictment issued against Deleon Guerrero and two others, their case involved a conspiracy to smuggle a cell phone with a charger into the Saipan prison for federal inmate Qiu Shuo in exchange for methamphetamine and \$500 cash, to be paid to Deleon Guerrero in January 2022.

Deleon Guerrero's co-defendants are Shou Qiu, also known as Ike, and Jiang Guang Zhang, aka Fat Brother.

The indictment stated that Qiu solicited the assistance of Deleon Guerrero from inside the prison, and Deleon Guerrero relied on his friend "GG" to coordinate with Qiu's friend, Zhang, to facilitate the transaction.

Mayor's Animal Shelter welcomes youth volunteers

The furry residents of the Mayor's Animal Shelter are receiving extra care and attention, thanks to the Saipan Humane Society's volunteer program. Volunteers from MHS Boonie Buddies and other family groups have been bathing puppies, walking friendly dogs, and hosting adoption events in the community.

According to Saipan Humane Society president Lauren Cabrera, "It is important to educate [the] youth on how to properly care for and show respect to animals, and hopefully motivate them to pursue careers in animal health one day. It would be wonderful to have a local veterinarian."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A family volunteer group at the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido hold up puppies after their duties.

Opportunities for volunteering can be coordinated by reaching out to the

Saipan Humane Society on Facebook, Instagram, or by emailing saipanhumane@gmail.com. It is important to schedule a time for volunteering with SHS, so



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas High School students from the Boonie Buddies Club volunteered to help bathe puppies and walk dogs at the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido.

one of the coordinators can provide orientation and assistance with the animals.

To learn more, visit the new SHS website at www.saipan-humane-society.org. (PR)

How to file your TRICARE claims overseas

FALLS CHURCH, Va.—Do you need to file a TRICARE Overseas claim for medical care or prescriptions you received overseas? If so, it's important to understand the different TRICARE Overseas claim submission methods available to you.

"There's more than one way to submit a TRICARE claim overseas," said Michael Griffin, program analyst with the TRICARE Overseas Program Office at the Defense Health Agency. "Choosing the quickest method to submit your claim and knowing what information you may need to provide can help ensure you get your claim processed in a timely manner."

Medical Claims

You can submit your claim directly to Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS), the TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) claims processor. There are three options.

1 TRICARE Overseas Secure Claims Portal

The TRICARE Overseas Secure Claims Portal is the fastest and most secure way to submit a claim. You can use the wizard, which helps guide you through the process. This ensures the claims processor receives your claim instantly and enters it directly into the claims processing system. You can also submit your claim via secure messaging through the portal. This is slightly slower, as your claim is entered into the system manually.

There are other benefits of using the portal, as detailed in this claims video. You can:

- Track the status of

your claim.

- Review your payment information.
- Communicate directly with WPS, the claims processor.
- Sign up for electronic funds transfer (direct deposit) to a U.S. bank account.
- You must first register to use the portal. To learn how to register for and use the portal, check out the tutorial videos.

2 Secure Fax

Using secure fax is another quick way to submit a claim. Fax your claim to +1-608-301-2251. Your claim is considered received on the same day of submission.

3 Overseas Postal Mail

Using postal mail is the least timely way to submit a claim and receive reimbursement. Because overseas-to-U.S. mail delivery timelines vary, delivery can take up to 28 days.

To help ensure that WPS processes your TRICARE Overseas claim in a timely manner once received, be sure to fully complete and sign the claim form (DD Form 2642). Remember to include the following required information:

- A clear and legible itemized bill or invoice from the provider, detailing the services rendered and the provider's name and address.
- A narrative description of the reason for the medical services received.
- Proof of payment
- Proof of other health insurance (OHI), if applicable. If you have OHI (such as national health insurance), TRICARE is always the

last payer. If applicable, include any explanation of benefits (EOB) from your OHI, outlining any payment or denial.

To find the mailing address you should use, go to TOP Claims Mailing Addresses.

Allow up to 30 days for WPS, the claims processor, to process your TRICARE Overseas claim after they receive it. In some cases, they may ask you to send additional information to determine benefit coverage to complete processing of the claim. After your claim is processed, it may take up to 28 days to receive your reimbursement in the mail.

Pharmacy claims

Do you need to file a claim for your prescription? This depends on where your

prescription was filled. As noted in the TRICARE Pharmacy Program Handbook, you don't need to file a claim if your prescription was filled at a military pharmacy, through TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery, or at a TRICARE retail network pharmacy.

If your prescription was filled at a non-network pharmacy, you'll need to file a claim to get reimbursed for covered prescription drugs. For prescriptions filled at non-network pharmacies in the U.S. or the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, Express Scripts is the pharmacy contractor to send your claim. For prescrip-

tions filled outside the U.S. and U.S. territories, submit your claim to WPS.

You can do this either online through the secure claims portal or by mail. Be sure to submit proof of payment with your overseas pharmacy claims. If you're in the Philippines, you must get your prescription filled at a TRICARE-certified pharmacy to ensure your claims are reimbursed. Visit Pharmacy Claims to learn more about filing claims.

Deadlines to file claims

The deadline to file a claim depends on when and where you received care. For care in the U.S. and U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puer-

to Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), you have one year from the date of service or discharge to submit a claim. For overseas care, you have three years. The currency exchange rate is determined by the last date of service or discharge for an inpatient admission.

For more information on how to file your TRICARE Overseas claim, check the TOP website. If you have questions or need help, you can contact your TOP Regional Call Center.

Would you like the latest TRICARE news sent to you by email? Visit the TRICARE Subscriptions page today, and create your personalized profile to get benefit updates, news, and more. (Defense Health Agency)



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID
ITB23-GOV-42300065

ROTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS EQUIPMENT
SUBMISSION DATE: **10:00 AM ChST, WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2023**

Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lieutenant Governor David M. Apatang, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), is soliciting sealed bids for the **Rota Department of Public Works Equipment**, Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project is funded by the 702 Covenant Capital Improvement Project funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on Wednesday, **April 5, 2023** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A **Pre-Bid Conference** will be held at the CIP Office at the Juan A. Sablan Administration Building located in Capitol Hill, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST, April 19, 2023**. Proposers may also request to participate virtually via Zoom Meetings five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled.

Questions regarding this ITB may be submitted via email to Ms. Nerissa B. Karakaya at nerissa.benavente@gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST, May 9, 2023**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.


Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST, May 9, 2023**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Governor, CNMI

/s/Brian S. Nicholas, Jr., Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services



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INVITATION TO BID
ITB23-GOV-42300066

NMTI ROOF REPLACEMENT & IMPROVEMENTS
SUBMISSION DATE: **9:00 AM ChST, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2023**

Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lieutenant Governor David M. Apatang, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), is soliciting sealed bids for the **NMTI Roof Replacement & Improvements**, Lower Base, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project is funded by the 702 Capital Improvement Project funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **Wednesday, April 11, 2023** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A **Pre-Bid Conference** will be held at the project site in Lower Base, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST, May 2, 2023**.

Questions regarding this ITB may be submitted via email to Ms. Nerissa B. Karakaya at nerissa.benavente@gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST, May 9, 2023**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST, May 15, 2023**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

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/s/ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Governor, CNMI

/s/Brian S. Nicholas, Jr., Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

H-1B initial electronic registration selection process completed

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has received enough electronic registrations during the initial registration period to reach the fiscal year 2024 H-1B numerical allocations (H-1B cap), including the advanced degree exemption (master's cap).

We have randomly selected from the registrations properly submitted to reach the cap, and have notified all prospective petitioners with selected registrations that they are eligible to file an H-1B cap-subject petition for the beneficiary named in the applicable selected registration.

Registrants' online accounts will now show one of the following statuses for each registration (that is, for each beneficiary registered):

■ **Submitted:** The registration has been submitted and is eligible for selection. If the initial selection process has been completed, this registration remains eligible, unless

subsequently invalidated, for selection in any subsequent selections for the fiscal year for which it was submitted.

■ **Selected:** Selected to file an H-1B cap petition.

■ **Denied:** Multiple registrations were submitted by or on behalf of the same registrant for the same beneficiary. If denied as a duplicate registration, all registrations submitted by or on behalf of the same registrant for this beneficiary for the fiscal year are invalid.

■ **Invalidated-Failed Payment:** A registration was submitted but the payment method was declined, not reconciled, disputed, or otherwise invalid.

For more information, visit the H-1B Electronic Registration Process page.

FY 2024 H-1B cap petitions may be filed starting April 1

H-1B cap-subject petitions for FY 2024, including those petitions eligible for the ad-

vanced degree exemption, may be filed with USCIS beginning April 1, 2023, if based on a valid, selected registration.

Only petitioners with selected registrations may file H-1B cap-subject petitions for FY 2024, and only for the beneficiary named in the applicable selected registration notice.

An H-1B cap-subject petition must be properly filed at the correct service center and within the filing period indicated on the relevant registration selection notice. The period for filing the H-1B cap-subject petition will be at least 90 days. Online filing is not available for H-1B petitions, so petitioners filing H-1B petitions must do so by paper. Petitioners must include a printed copy of the applicable registration selection notice with the FY 2024 H-1B cap-subject petition.

Petitioners filing H-1B cap-subject petitions, includ-

ing those petitions eligible for the advanced degree exemption, must still establish eligibility for petition approval based on existing statutory and regulatory requirements.

Selection in the registration process does not relieve the petitioner of submitting evidence or otherwise establishing eligibility, as registration only pertains to eligibility to file the H-1B cap-subject petition.

For more information, visit the H-1B Cap Season page.

Pre-paid mailer suspension

We will not use prepaid mailers to send out any communication or final notices for FY 2024 cap-subject H-1B petitions, including those requesting consideration under the advanced degree exemption.

The process of printing and mailing the cap-subject H-1B petition approval notices by first-class mail is fully auto-

mated. Using prepaid mailers requires a separate, more time-consuming manual process. The existing automated process is more efficient for both petitioners and USCIS. Because of this, we will use first-class mail as we work to process all cap-subject petitions in a timely manner.

Receipt notice delays

When we receive a timely and properly filed H-1B cap subject petition, the petitioner (and, if applicable, the petitioner's legal representative) will be provided a Form I-797, Notice of Action, communicating receipt of the petition. Due to increased filing volumes typically seen during H-1B cap filing periods, there are instances where a petition is timely and properly filed, but issuance of the Form I-797 is delayed. If you are a petitioner and have confirmation from the delivery service that the pe-

tion was delivered, but you have not yet received a Form I-797 confirming receipt of the petition, you should not submit a second petition. If you have confirmation from the delivery service that the petition was delivered and you then submit a second petition, you will be considered to have submitted duplicate petitions. This will result in denial or revocation of both petitions.

If more than 30 days have passed since the confirmation of delivery and you have still not received a Form I-797, you may contact the USCIS Contact Center for assistance.

If you receive notification from the delivery service, or your tracking information suggests, that there may be a delay or damage to the package or that the package was misrouted, you should follow the Delivery Service Error Guidance on the H-1B Cap Season webpage. (USCIS)

Amata at historic meeting of Taiwan president, US speaker



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-AS) and Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

American Samoa Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen speaks with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy last Wednesday.

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-AS) attended last Wednesday's historic meeting between Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, along with a bipartisan delegation of Members of Congress. Notably, the meeting was the first on American soil between the president of Taiwan and the House speaker.

Amata later released the following statement:

"As a representative from the Pacific region, I was pleased to join Speaker McCarthy and other Members in his meeting with President Tsai, my fifth time to take part in meetings with her. I'm among the Members of Congress who've been to Taiwan, so I greatly appreciate Speaker McCarthy's strong understanding of the importance of this friendship, and the bipartisan consensus he

led in this historic meeting. This was a bilateral daylong conversation, including topics such as keeping our supply chain strong and dependable, and cooperation between us on a host of issues. Most of all, this meeting emphasizes that we share a commitment to freedom and the principles of democracy. President Tsai is a courageous leader for her people, and Speaker McCarthy was right to stand with her in this way to express U.S. commitment to our shared ideals.

"As I said at the PICL summit last September, we need to be wary of PRC's intentions in the Indo-Pacific, and strengthening our relationship with Taiwan remains an important part of lasting peace in the region. This month, we celebrate the 44th anniversary of the successful Taiwan Relations Act, and I look forward to many more years of the U.S. working with our friends in Taiwan." (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Conference table view of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and Members of Congress, including Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-AS), right.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

If nude 'David' makes us blush, then shame on us

It was news everywhere, from CNN to "Saturday Night Live."

The principal of a Tallahassee charter school was fired after a photograph of an iconic masterpiece, Michelangelo's heroic nude sculpture David, symbol of one of the Bible's best-known parables, was shown to sixth-graders.

It wasn't the nude sculpture that proved so embarrassing. It was the behavior of grownups.

The official explanation was that parents were supposed to be told ahead of time that the picture would be shown—as they were last year—but weren't.

"Parents are entitled to know anytime their child is being taught a controversial topic and picture," said Barney Bishop III, chair of the board at Tallahassee Classical School, in an interview with the online magazine Slate.

That, presumably, is so they can keep their children home on those days.

Bishop said there were other job performance issues, which he would not discuss, to dismiss principal Hope Carrasquilla.

No matter. The policy should concern the public. It's a charter school, not a private one, which means taxpayers are paying for this.

For their money, they're entitled to schools that teach critical thinking, which has been called our greatest national deficit.

Critical thinking is essential to informed citizenship. But it is incompatible with a policy that allows students to avoid controversial subjects. In fact, it's impossible under such circumstances.

The David sculpture itself is an example of the difference between visceral and critical thinking.

Some people, like those overly squeamish Tallahassee parents, see only genitals. People around the world see much more.

The Florentines are so enormously proud of native son Michelangelo's marble sculpture David that they have three of him. After the original was moved to a museum to protect it from the elements, they commissioned two copies to stand in public squares where everyone can see them—even children.

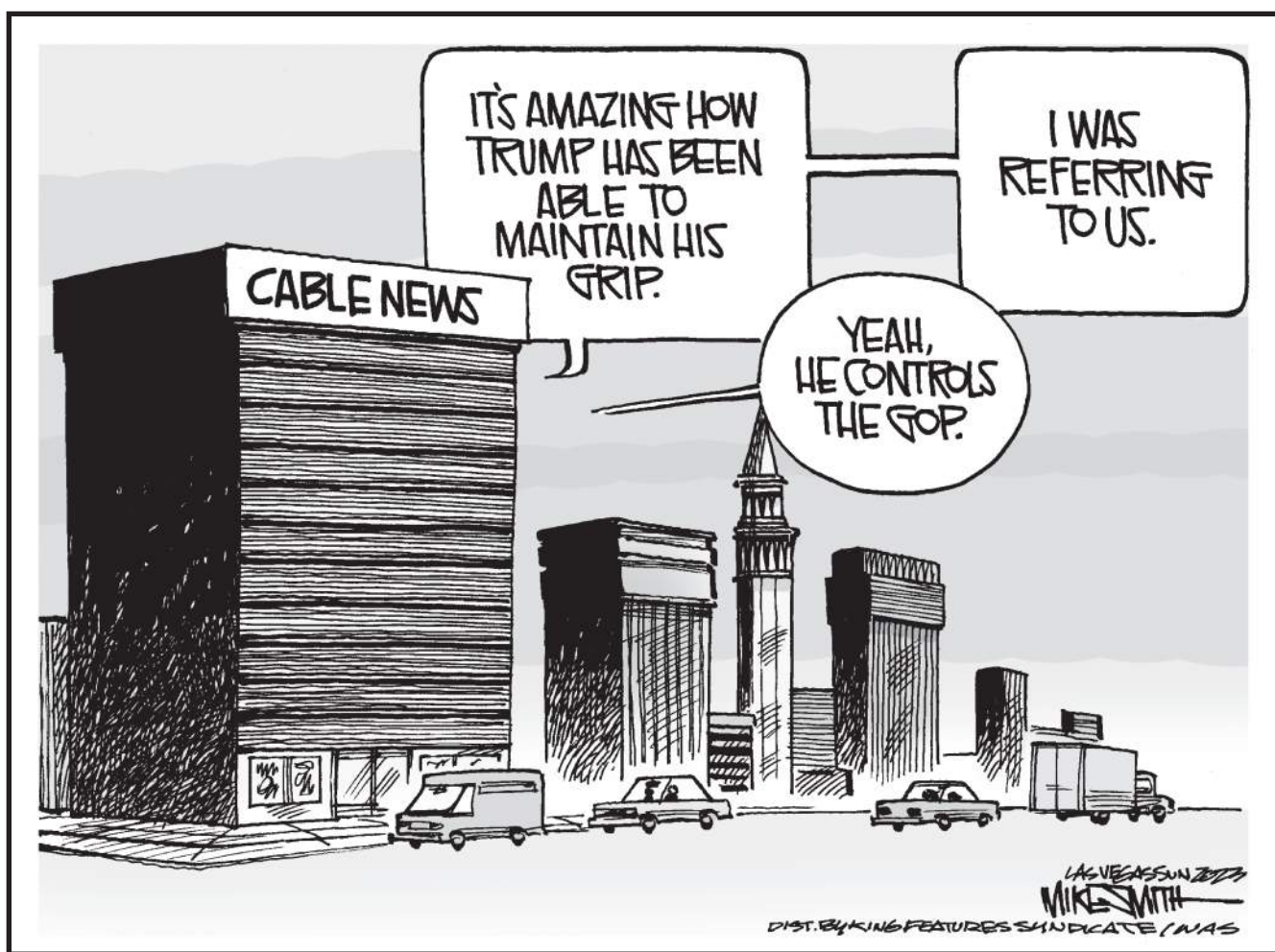
David's nudity expresses the religious spirit Michelangelo was appointed to convey. Facing the giant foe Goliath armed with sword and shield, David is clad only in the invisible armor of his faith in God. He carries only a slingshot. His body is tensed for combat.

The Galleria dell'Accademia, in Florence, Italy, where the original statue stands, offers this additional explanation on its website: "Thanks to its imposing perfection, the biblical figure of David became the symbol of the liberty and freedom of the Republican ideals, showing Florence's readiness to defend itself."

Yet in our own backyard, people refuse to see it.

On her blog, Florida Jolt, Delray Beach political activ-

See NUDE on Page 9



Ukraine has given the world a blueprint to fight hunger

Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year triggered tumult across global grain markets. As the cost of corn and wheat surged, panic spread about instability in countries from Yemen to Bangladesh that depend on the warring region for low-cost grains. Would famine worsen? Would civil unrest ensue?

While food-insecure countries have suffered keenly from high grain prices over the past year, some of the consequences we feared most have been avoided. Even as the conflict continues to rage, grain markets have calmed down considerably, with prices close to pre-invasion levels—a better outcome than many expected.

Astute diplomacy, next-level technologies, a resilient distribution infrastructure and efficient trading strategies were key elements of coping with these disrupted markets. The world acted quickly to leverage those strengths across global networks, moving grain from regions where it's cheap and plentiful to those where it was scarce and costly.

Imagine what would be possible if we planned ahead? At a time when the global food supply is increasingly vulnerable to geopolitical and climatic disruptions, here are five crucial ways we can build on lessons from a year of conflict in Ukraine:

1 Refocus funding efforts for food aid.

Spreading hunger has put food-relief agencies such as the United Nation's World Food Program and US Agency for International Development under pressure to expand assistance. In 2022, WFP Director David Beasley raised \$14 billion from public and private donors—more than double previous years—but took flack for publicly cajoling billionaires such as Elon Musk to help. Such aggressive measures are entirely defensible. The money Beasley raised went largely to buying high-cost grains and channeling the supplies to populations that can't afford them.

Cindy McCain, who will soon be succeeding Beasley, and the forthright USAID Administrator Samantha Power should follow suit with continued bipartisan calls to fund their work. Food aid organizations must look beyond stopgap handouts and forge long-term strategies to subsidize resilient farming practices in climate-stressed regions. Supporting food-insecure populations must become a central topic of every major international conference going forward, from Davos to COP 28.

2 Strengthen diplomatic channels that anticipate future food disruptions.

Global hunger today would be far more acute if not for the Black Sea Grain Initiative, an agreement between Russia and Ukraine forged

By **AMANDA LITTLE**

Bloomberg Opinion

Amanda Little is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering agriculture and climate. She is a professor of journalism and science writing at Vanderbilt University and author of *The Fate of Food: What We'll Eat in a Bigger, Hotter, Smarter World*.



and recently renewed with the help of Turkey and the UN to ensure the continued shipment of agricultural and fertilizer products from Ukraine's key Black Sea ports. The agreement has brought some relief to countries including Turkey, Morocco, Egypt and Kenya that rely heavily on imports from this region, as well as Pakistan, where 5 million citizens are currently close to famine.

This kind of diplomacy will be essential to stabilizing markets after political and environmental shocks. No country will be insulated from food disruptions. As Joe Janzen, who teaches agricultural economics at the University of Illinois, told me: "When global markets face shocks, importing and exporting countries become more interdependent, not less."

3 Reassess how staple crops are traded.

Grain traders, brokers and regulators—the men and women behind the scenes who transmit price signals throughout the market—catalyzed millions of acres of new wheat and corn production in the US, Argentina, Canada and Brazil to address the Ukraine shortfall and help rebalance supplies. But merchants, largely employed by agribusiness giants like Archer-Daniels-Midland Co. and Cargill Inc., are focused on profit, not alleviating hunger.

The Biden administration and its Commodity Futures Trading Commission need to think about how to help maintain integrity, transparency and perhaps even justice in global grain markets. In a crisis, could grain flows be guided not just according to who pays the highest price but to which regions are most in need? How can the data and price signals become more accessible not just to traders and brokers, but to the consumers who depend on imports? As of now, the US and EU are among the few global players with commissions to set rules for fair and transparent grain-trading practices.

See UKRAINE on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Even historians can get trumped

We, the chroniclers, in order to help the People of the United States form a more perfect Union (or at least salvage the shaky, imperfect one we've got!) are today proposing a two-part effort that may be our best chance for re-establishing Justice and returning our homeland to a semblance of domestic Tranquility.

First, we all need to simply pause, declare and then implement a Great American Timeout!

Why? Because, as we have just discovered about ourselves during this first ever arrest and arraignment of a former U.S. president, everyone's political and even personal values—left, center, right—have become all bollixed and backward. None of us got this quite right. We all need to downshift our overwrought gray-cells—rewind, rethink and maybe re-sync. We need to reconnect with the core values that once helped us pick our politics.

Second, we then need to declare and implement a Great American Reset!

We all need to get our personal and political patooties back to where they always used to be. We need to get ourselves back to being true to ourselves.

This was a week where people of all political persuasions had legitimate reasons to look at what their side has just done—and say: Wait! That's not what we stand for. We are better than that. Tuesday, in New York City, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg brought the first criminal indictment, arrest and arraignment of a former U.S. president in U.S. history. Donald Trump's crime wasn't really paying a porn star hush money to keep quiet about sex (that isn't a crime). It was paying her during his 2016 presidential campaign and not listing it as a campaign contribution. That legal technicality is apparently what made it a felony.

No wonder, as we watched Tuesday's slo-mo news drag out, we all knew we weren't watching the crime of the century being pursued. It just didn't compare with watching Trump being arrested for things we have long known about: trying to overturn the 2020 election Trump lost. Or coercing election officials. Or hiding classified documents from FBI and archives officials.

The timing of this was off-putting. Democrats found themselves privately confiding that they actually agreed with Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah. He said Trump was unfit to be president—but he criticized the district attorney for having “overstretched” to charge a political opponent with a felony. Romney called that “a dangerous precedent.” Democrats know that someday some red state DA will do it to them.

The New York City district attorney would have been wise to find a way to wait—and not go first. Atlanta's Fulton County District Attorney Fani T. Willis had said in January that her office's charging decisions were “imminent.” A grand jury with the authority to indict was formed in March. Major election interference charges may be just weeks away.

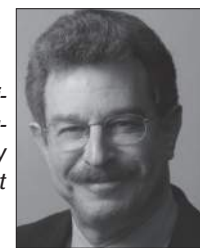
If that New York City case had been announced after Atlanta's decision, or a major indictment for deliberately withholding classified documents, none of us would be focusing on whether that New York felony indictment was an “overreach.” It would just seem like an add-on to the real, fundamental crimes against our nation's democracy.

Meanwhile, we all can use our present national timeout to get back in touch with our core values—the ones that helped us decide we are Republicans, or Democrats or independents. We need to remind ourselves of just how ugly it can be when we deep-six our core values, just for an instant feel-good moment. And that's just what Trump did on Wednesday, when he was feeling alone and victimized in Mar-a-Lago.

By **MARTIN SCHRAM**

Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.



Trump, still the leader of the Republican Party that for a half century had branded itself as America's law-and-order party, deep-sixed all that and borrowed the hated slogan made infamous by America's farthest left fringe. Trump urged Republicans to “defund” the federal police. Really.

“Republicans in Congress should defund the DOJ and FBI until they come to their senses,” Trump wrote, using all caps, on his Truth Social site.

This week, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., did a full-Jimmy Swaggart, pleading in a teary, trembling-chin video for people to send money to help Trump (who calls himself a billionaire) pay his lawyers. But Trump's call to “defund the DOJ and FBI” was more than even Trump's Robin could take. Graham called Trump's “defund” the federal police plea “a bad idea,” adding: “Terrorism lurks out there, and taking your guard down for one moment could be very dangerous for the public.”

Of course, Lindsey wishes his hero would issue a powerful law-and-order declaration, maybe something like this: “The Radical Left Democrats new theme is ‘Defund the Police’. ...I am the complete opposite, more money for Law Enforcement!” Oops, that was then-President Trump, tweeting on June 4, 2020.

OMG, GOP!

NUDE

From Page 8

ist and former mayoral candidate Tracy Caruso made the statue sound pornographic by describing one of the most important works of art in history as “a picture of a penis.”

Liberty and freedom are the products of centuries of controversy, which continues to this day. A school that suppresses controversy is no friend of freedom. Neither is Gov. Ron DeSantis, nor his legislative allies, bent on suppressing academic freedom in schools and colleges, so that only their sanitized version of American history can be taught.

In this distorted view, racism was irrelevant to our history and has no influence in America today.

Tallahassee Classical School, as it happens, is—or was—an exponent of the conservative curriculum of Hillsdale College, the Michigan institution that DeSantis fancies as the model of what he intends New College of Florida to become in Sarasota.

‘A distraction ... a parody’

But even Hillsdale appeared disgusted by the David fiasco, and said March 30 it is “no longer affiliated” with the Tallahassee school.

In a press release, Hillsdale defended showing David to students: “This drama around teaching Michelangelo's ‘David’ sculpture, one of the most important works of art in existence, has become a distraction from, and a parody of, the actual aims of classical education. Of course, Hillsdale's K-12 art curriculum includes Michelangelo's ‘David’ and other works of art that depict the human form.”

Tallahassee Classical School said it was disappointed by Hillsdale's decision, and said: “At no time has Tallahassee Classical School characterized Michelangelo's statue of David as pornography. Any suggestion otherwise is false and defamatory.”

Hillsdale is essential to the growing Christian nationalist movement, even if it is not an avowed part of it. The Baptist Joint Committee, a nonprofit devoted to religious freedom, has been warning against Christian nationalism.

On the website Good Faith Media, the BJC's assistant general counsel, the Rev. Jennifer Hawks, wrote this:

“A robust history curriculum in the public schools is per-

haps the most practical way to oppose Christian nationalism ... We should start with advocating for strong public schools whose curriculum includes all of us and reflects American history as it was, not as a small group imagines it to have been.”

©2023 Orlando Sentinel



AP
Visitors stand in front of Michelangelo's “David statue” in the Accademia Gallery in Florence, Italy, Tuesday, March 28, 2023.

UKRAINE

From Page 8

The Biden administration should consider a new attempt at partnering with the UN to establish an international agency for common standards among all major grain exporting and importing countries.

4 Invest in logistics infrastructure.

The future of food security will involve a complex game of transportation logistics to move grains more expediently from nations with abundance to those with scarcity. Investing in better storage facilities, railways, highways, shipping networks and ports has never been more important. Investment is especially needed in the newest frontiers of low-cost grain production, from Canada to Mongolia, where warming temperatures are increasing prospects for grain production.

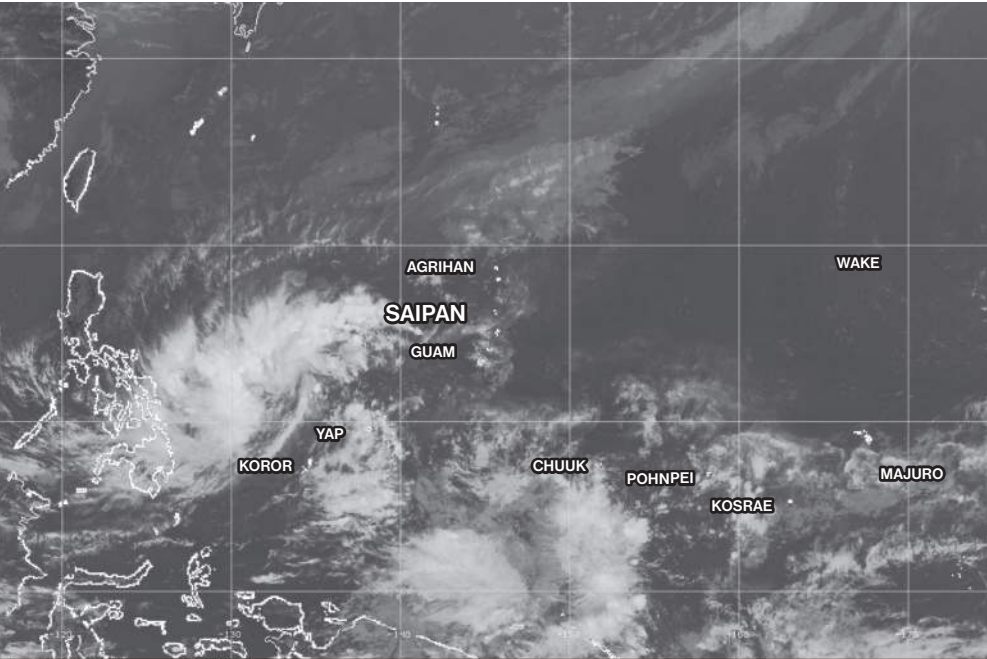
5 Double down on developing the next generation of ag tech.

By mid-century the world may reach a threshold of global warming beyond which current agricultural practices “can no longer support large human civilizations,” according to an International Panel on Climate Change report. One solution is to change current practices with technology that can enable the production of more food on less land. We can usher in this new era by applying the tools at hand: artificial intelligence, robotics, cellular agriculture, genetic engineering, vertical farming, satellites and big data. Those tools can also enhance efforts to restore traditional and regenerative agricultural practices that will improve the integrity of soil health, making croplands more resilient to heat, flooding and drought.

Global grain markets are still fragile. Countless environmental and political variables could deliver more shocks at any time, hampering yields from the US, Latin America, Canada, China and other major producers. But in the past 12 months, the rebalancing of grain supplies and the quelling of prices prove that we have the ability to chart a sustainable path for the road ahead.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Isolated showers. Partly sunny		Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny	
87°	78°	87°	78°	87°	78°	87°	77°	87°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 6:16 AM, MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Mostly cloudy skies with the only showers of note are in southern Guam`s waters. Satellite imagery shows little to nothing up stream from us.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	84° / 75°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	87° / 78°	
Kosrae	Showers	85° / 79°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:05 AM	6:30 PM
Wednesday	6:05 AM	6:30 PM
Thursday	6:04 AM	6:30 PM
Friday	6:03 AM	6:31 PM
Saturday	6:03 AM	6:31 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	9:42 AM	11:21 PM
Wednesday	-	10:42 AM	-
Thursday	-	12:23 AM	11:44 AM
Friday	-	1:21 AM	12:48 PM
Saturday	-	2:15 AM	1:51 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	59° / 54°	
Beijing	Scattered Thunderstorms	85° / 71°	
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	87° / 82°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	85° / 74°	
London	Light Rain	87° / 64°	
Los Angeles	Cloudy	89° / 65°	
Manila	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	55° / 44°	
Miami	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 80°	
New York	Sunny	84° / 69°	
Osaka	Sunny	93° / 77°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	80° / 58°	
Busan	Thunderstorms	81° / 74°	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	91° / 67°	
Salem	Thunderstorms	90° / 73°	
San Francisco	Cloudy	61° / 53°	
Seoul	Thunderstorms	78° / 74°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	95° / 77°	
Washington, DC	Sunny	88° / 67°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
5:06 AM	Low Tide	1.26	
9:56 AM	High Tide	1.78	
5:33 PM	Low Tide	-0.18	
-	-	-	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 1, 2023							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA184	10:25PM	4:15AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
				UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
				UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW9308	3:45AM	7:30AM	4, 7	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW9307	9:00PM	2:45AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily	3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun	3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily	3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

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Business

Yadokari Kitchen: Home of savory Japanese pancakes

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Yadokari Kitchen is the home of savory Japanese pancakes on Saipan as it is the only establishment on the island that sells okonomiyaki.

The Japanese bento and snack bar was opened by co-owners Gina Ignacio and Saho Moriwake in October 2021 and its claim to fame is the aforementioned okonomiyaki.

Also known as Japanese pizza, okonomiyaki is a Japanese teppanyaki savory pancake dish made up of wheat flour batter and other ingredients.

Okonomiyaki can be cooked with an assortment of ingredients like cabbage, meat, and seafood, and its toppings include okonomiyaki sauce, aonori (green laver), katsuobushi, Japanese mayon-



Yadokari Kitchen is located at stall No. 8 at Sugar King Park.

MARK RABAGO



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Yadokari Kitchen is known for their savory Japanese pancakes called okonomiyaki.

naise, and pickled ginger.

Ignacio said she partnered with Moriwake because both have been longtime cooks of Japanese restaurants and share a fondness of okonomiyaki and other savory snacks from the Land of the Rising Sun.

"We opened a snack bar here at Sugar King Park and since vendors sell mostly local and Filipino food here, we thought of making Japanese food. We got the slot here because it's different from the others as I said we sell Japanese food," said Ignacio.

As for the nomenclature, both said they chose Yadokari as not only the snack bar's name but also its mascot because it's Japanese for hermit crab and their business is the lone Japanese snack bar at Sugar King Park.

Aside from okonomiyaki, Yadokari Kitchen has also become known for its korokke (Japanese croquettes), karaage (Japanese fried chicken), gyoza (Japanese dumplings), gyudon (Japanese beef rice), and takoyaki (ball-shaped Japanese snack made of a wheat flour-based batter and usually pieces of octopus).

Those pining for a sample of Japanese snacks available at their stall, Ignacio and Moriwake recommend ordering the Yadokari bento, which is a combination of karaage, gyoza, korokke, and menchi katsu (Japanese burger cutlet).

What's more, all food at



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Karaage or Japanese fried chicken is also a favorite at Yadokari Kitchen.

Yadokari Kitchen is made fresh and it's highly recommended to phone in your orders before dropping by.

"We serve freshly made food, so you don't have to wait if you make a reservation by phone," said Ignacio.

While both co-owners are living their dream of propagating Japanese snacks on Saipan, Ignacio and Moriwake admitted it's been a challenging journey so far because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When we opened we were already in the pandemic so we don't have a lot of tourists on Saipan. We actually opened Yadokari Kitchen with catering to tourists in mind. We actually do have local and Filipino customers but not as much," said Ignacio.

To supplement walk-in orders at the snack bar, Yadokari Kitchen also entertains bulk orders of party trays with oko-

nomiyaki and karaage being the most popular.

"It's really hard to run a business during a pandemic, but it's not only us experiencing this as most businesses on Saipan are experiencing this also," added Ignacio, who also said she and Moriwake continue to work at Japanese restaurants in the evening.

Future plans include offering delivery service for a nominal fee.

Yadokari Kitchen is open every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, from 11am to 2pm. They, however, are planning to extend their operating hours to 7pm once tourists come back and the economy improves.

Yadokari Kitchen is located at stall No. 8 at Sugar King Park and for more information, call (670) 284-7429 or go to their Instagram and Facebook accounts.

As India's population soars above all, fewer women have jobs

MUMBAI, India (AP)—Sheela Singh cried the day she handed in her resignation.

For 16 years, she had been a social worker in Mumbai, India's frenetic financial capital, and she loved the work. But her family kept telling her she needed to stay at home to take care of her two children. She resisted the pressure for years, but when she found out her daughter was skipping school when she was at work, it felt like she didn't have a choice.

"Everyone used to tell me my kids were neglected ... it made me feel really bad," Singh, 39, said.

When she resigned in 2020, Singh was earning more money than her husband, an autorickshaw driver whose earnings fluctuated day to day. But

nobody suggested he quit.

"His friends used to taunt him that he was living off my salary," Singh said. "I thought that clearly there was no value in me working so what's the use?"

India is on the cusp of surpassing China to become the world's most populous country, and its economy is among the fastest-growing in the world. But the number of Indian women in the workforce, already among the 20 lowest in the world, has been shrinking for years.

It's not only a problem for women like Singh, but a growing challenge for India's own economic ambitions if its estimated 670 million women are left behind as its population expands. The hope is that

India's fast-growing working-age population will propel its growth for years to come. Yet experts worry this could just as easily become a demographic liability if India fails to ensure its rising population, especially its women, are employed.

Without Singh's income, her family can no longer afford to live in Mumbai, one of Asia's most expensive cities, and she's now preparing to move back to her village to save money. "But there are no jobs there," she sighed.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story is part of an ongoing series exploring what it means for the 1.4 billion inhabitants of India to live in what will be the world's most populated country.

Home-based workers became younger, more diverse in pandemic

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

In many respects, the demographic makeup of people working from home from 2019 to 2021 became more like workers who were commuting, while the share of the U.S. labor force working from home went from 5.7% in 2019 to 17.9% in 2021, as restrictions were implemented to help slow the spread of the virus, according to a report released last week based on American Community Survey data.

"The increase in home-based workers corresponded with a decline in drivers, carpoolers, transit riders, and most other types of commuters," the report said.

The share of people working from home between ages 25 and 34 jumped from 16% to 23% from 2019 to 2021. The share of home-based

workers who are Black went from 7.8% to 9.5%, and it went from 5.7% to 9.6% for Asian workers. It remained flat for Hispanic workers, the report said.

The share of home-based workers with a college degree also jumped from just over half to more than two-thirds, and people working from home were more likely to have moved in the past year than commuters.

The two industry groups that saw the greatest jumps in people working from home were in information, where it went from 10.4% to 42%, and finance, insurance and real estate, going from 10.8% to 38.4%. Professional and administrative services, also went from 12.6% to 36.5%.

The smallest gains were in agriculture and mining; entertainment and food ser-

vices; and armed forces.

While every income level saw jumps in people working from home, those in the highest income bracket were most likely to work from home. While it doubled from 2019 to 2021 for workers in the lowest income bracket, it tripled for those in the highest, the report said.

Home-based work also varied by region. By 2021, it was more prevalent in the West and Northeast, making up about a fifth of the workforce, compared to 16.2% in the South and 15.8% in the Midwest. The variation may have been caused by the availability of Internet access, the cluster of information technology jobs on the coasts and the way people commute, whether by car or public transportation, the report said.

Nation

Trump's response to criminal charges revives election lies

NEW YORK (AP)—Legally, the most important words former President Donald Trump said after he was charged with 34 felonies by the Manhattan District Attorney last week were “not guilty.” But, politically, the most significant may be “election interference.”

Trump's repetition of those words, which have been taken up by other top Republicans, show how he is trying to turn his historic position as the first former president charged with crimes to his advantage. It's another example of what's been a consistent refrain throughout his political career—claiming without evidence that an election is being rigged against him.

After his initial court appearance in the New York case, the first of several in which he is in legal jeopardy, Trump ticked through the varied investigations he was facing and branded them as “massive” attempts to interfere with the 2024 election.

“Our justice system has become lawless,” Trump said as he appeared before supporters as his Florida home, Mar-a-Lago. “They're using it now, in addition to everything else,

Health secretary slams abortion pill ruling as ‘not America’

WASHINGTON (AP)—The nation's top health official said Sunday that a court ruling threatening the availability of a main drug used in medication abortion was “not America” and he did not rule out defying the judge's order if necessary.

“We want the courts to overturn this reckless decision,” Xavier Becerra, President Joe Biden's health secretary, told CNN's “State of the Union.” “We want, yes, that women continue to have access to a drug that's proven itself safe. Millions of women have used this drug around the world.”

He stressed that for now, women do have access to the abortion medication mifepristone after a federal judge in Texas, Donald Trump-appointed Matthew Kacsmaryk, put his ruling from Friday on hold for a week so federal officials could file a challenge. The drug was approved in 2000 by the Food and Drug Administration, which is overseen by the Health and Human Services Department headed by Becerra.

“For America's sake and for women's sake, we have to prevail in this,” he said.

Biden has said his administration would fight the Texas ruling. Kacsmaryk's 67-page



Former President Donald Trump sits at the defense table with his legal team in a Manhattan court, Tuesday, April 4, 2023, in New York.

to win elections.”

Trump has made some version of those claims in at least 20 social media posts since March 3, the bulk of which occurred in the last two weeks, accelerating when a Manhattan grand jury appeared to be wrapping up its work and preparing to indict the former president. Trump declared his

order gave the government seven days to appeal.

“We intend to do everything to make sure it's available to them not just in a week, but moving forward, period, because mifepristone is one of the safest and most effective medicines that we have seen over the last 20 years to help women with their health care, especially abortion care,” Becerra said.

Asked whether he might recommend that the FDA ignore a ban, Becerra said, “Everything is on the table.”

There is uncertainty about access to the most commonly used method of abortion in the United States following two separate and conflicting court rulings in Texas and Washington over the legality of mifepristone.

Kacsmaryk's decision ordering a hold on federal approval of mifepristone overruled decades of scientific approval. But a ruling at nearly the same time in Washington state from that U.S. District Judge Thomas O. Rice, a Barack Obama appointee, directed U.S. authorities not to make any changes that would restrict access to the drug in at least 17 states where Democrats sued in an effort to protect availability.

latest bid for the White House shortly after the November midterms, in what some in his orbit saw as an effort to head off the various probes swirling around him.

Alleging an election is being stolen from him is a routine Trump tactic, despite no evidence to back up his assertions. When competing for the GOP presidential nomination in 2016, Trump claimed his loss in the Iowa caucuses was due to fraud. When he

Proud Boys leaders' Jan. 6 sedition trial inches to a close

WASHINGTON (AP)—After almost three months of testimony, dozens of witnesses and countless legal fights, a jury will soon decide whether the onetime leader of the Proud Boys extremist group is guilty in one of the most serious cases brought in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Closing arguments could be as early as this week before jurors decide whether to convict Proud Boys national chairman Enrique Tarrio and four lieutenants of seditious conspiracy for what prosecutors say was a plot to forcibly stop the transfer of presidential power from Republican Donald Trump to Democrat Joe Biden after the 2020 election.

In a trial that has lasted over twice as long as expected, little new information has emerged about the Jan. 6 attack that halted Congress' certification of Biden's victory or the far-right extremist group's role in the Capitol riot. But a guilty verdict against Tarrio, who wasn't even in Washington, D.C., when the riot erupted, would affirm that those accused of planning and inciting the violence could be held responsible even if they didn't

won the White House that November but lost the popular vote, Trump claimed the only reason for falling short in the latter category was because undocumented immigrants voted. A task force he formed to find voter fraud disbanded without finding any evidence to back up his claim.

In 2020, Trump began arguing the election would be fraudulent months before voting started. He attacked efforts to loosen restrictions on mail voting dur-

join in it.

The case is nearing a close as a new problem may be on the horizon for the Proud Boys, a neofascist group known for brawling and street fights with left-wing activists and disrupting storytelling sessions by drag performers and other LGBTQ events around the country.

The group, Tarrio and two others on trial are also facing a separate, multimillion-dollar lawsuit. A judge is poised to decide how much they should have to pay a historic Black church in Washington for Proud Boys destroying a Black Lives Matter sign during a weekend of pro-Trump rallies in December 2020 that erupted into violence. Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church is seeking up to \$22 million in punitive damages, saying it was part of an effort to intimidate those who fight for racial justice.

Tarrio wasn't in Washington on Jan. 6 because he had been arrested two days earlier for his role in burning another Black Lives Matter banner torn down from a different Washington church, Asbury United Methodist. Tarrio was ordered to stay out of the city

ing the coronavirus pandemic, and expanded those allegations after losing the election to claim he'd actually won it. Those lies led to the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the U.S. Capitol.

Federal and state election officials and Trump's own attorney general have said there is no credible evidence the 2020 election was tainted. The former president's allegations of fraud were also roundly rejected by courts, including by judges Trump appointed.

Trump is behaving like a politician in the legal crosshairs, said Steven Levitsky, a Harvard political scientist.

“He's certainly not the first politician to be prosecuted—sometimes fairly, sometimes not—to play the political victim card,” Levitsky said.

Levitsky, who cowrote the book “How Democracies Die,” said that several former presidents of other countries, when prosecuted, have claimed it was a plot to foil their future elections. Most recently, that was the complaint of Brazil's former president Luis Inácio Lula Da Silva after he was jailed before the 2018 election. Silva was freed by his country's supreme court and won back the presidency in October.

What's notable in Trump's case, however, is that his own

after his arrest.

The seditious conspiracy case in Washington's federal court, which began with opening statements in January, has been slowed by bickering between the judge and defense attorneys, repeated requests for a mistrial, lengthy cross-examinations of witnesses and other legal maneuvers that often kept jurors waiting in the wings instead of hearing courtroom testimony.

On trial with Tarrio are Proud Boys chapter leaders Ethan Nordean, of Auburn, Washington; and Zachary Rehl, of Philadelphia; self-described Proud Boys organizer Joseph Biggs, of Ormond Beach, Florida; and Dominic Pezzola, a Proud Boys member from Rochester, New York.

It is unclear if any of them will testify before the defense rests and jurors hear attorneys' closing arguments.

The backbone of the government's case is a trove of messages that Proud Boys leaders privately exchanged on the Telegram platform before, during and after the Capitol riot. Their online rhetoric became increasingly angry with each failure by

party is echoing the stolen election claims ahead of the next campaign. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy last month said he was directing his party's committee chairs to “investigate if federal funds are being used to subvert our democracy by interfering in elections with politically motivated prosecutions.”

“That a whole party is carrying this line is somewhat unusual,” Levitsky said.

Last week's charges in New York court stemmed from Trump's reimbursements to his lawyer at the time, Michael Cohen, of hush money paid in the waning days of the 2016 presidential election to porn actress Stormy Daniels, who alleged they had an affair. Even some critics of Trump have seen the charges as a stretch of New York laws.

The heart of the Manhattan case is prosecutors' claim that Trump falsified business records at his company to make the payoff in order to keep a potentially damaging story quiet while he was campaigning—an illegal attempt by Trump, they argued, to try to influence the election.

The former president also faces legal jeopardy from other investigations, two of which are related to his attempts to try to interfere with the 2020 election.

Trump's lawyers to challenge election results in court.

“If Biden steals this election, (the Proud Boys) will be political prisoners,” Tarrio posted in Nov. 16, 2020. “We won't go quietly ... I promise.”

As the mob attacked Capitol, Tarrio posted on social media, “Don't (expletive) leave.”

When a Proud Boys member asked, “Are we a militia yet?” Tarrio responded with one word—“Yep”—in a voice note.

“Make no mistake,” Tarrio wrote. “We did this.”

Defense attorneys have argued that there is no evidence of a plan for the Proud Boys to attack the Capitol on Jan. 6.

They have stressed that Proud Boys had FBI informants in their ranks who didn't raise any red flags about the group before Jan. 6. In an effort to show jurors that Tarrio was trying to avoid violence, they also showed how Tarrio frequently communicated with an officer assigned to monitor extremist groups' activity in Washington and advised the officer of the group's plans in the weeks before Jan. 6.

Asia

China military displays force toward Taiwan after Tsai trip



TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—China's military sent several dozen warplanes and 11 warships toward Taiwan in a display of force following its president's trip to the U.S., the island's Defense Ministry said Monday.

The Chinese military earlier had announced three-day "combat readiness patrols" as a warning to Taiwan, a self-ruled island which China claims as its own. The actions follow President Tsai Ing-wen's delicate diplomatic mission to shore up Taiwan's dwindling alliances in Central America and boost U.S. support, a trip capped with a sensitive meeting with U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in California. A U.S. con-

gressional delegation also met with Tsai over the weekend in Taiwan after she returned.

China responded to the McCarthy meeting by imposing a travel ban and financial sanctions against those associated with Tsai's U.S. trip and with increased military activity.

Between 6 a.m. Sunday and 6 a.m. Monday, a total of 70 planes were detected and half crossed the median of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary once tacitly accepted by both sides, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense. Among the planes that crossed the median were 8 J-16 fighter jets, 4 J-1 fighters, 8 Su-30 fighters and reconnaissance planes.

That followed a full day

between Friday and Saturday, where eight warships and 71 planes were detected near Taiwan, according to the island's Defense Ministry. The ministry said in a statement it was approaching the situation from the perspective of "not escalating conflict, and not causing disputes."

Taiwan said it monitored the Chinese moves through its land-based missile systems, as well as on its own navy vessels.

In addition to combat readiness patrols, China's People's Liberation Army would hold "live fire training" in Luoyuan Bay in China's Fujian province opposite Taiwan, the local Maritime Authority announced over the weekend.

they sacrifice for their faith," Ennett told The AP. "They really put themselves in the shoes of Jesus."

Enaje survived nearly unscathed when he fell from a three-story building in 1985, prompting him to undergo the ordeal as thanksgiving for what he considered a miracle. He extended the ritual after loved ones recovered from serious illnesses, one after another, turning him into a village celebrity as the "Christ" in the Lenten reenactment of the Way of the Cross.

Ahead of their crucifixion on a dusty hill, Enaje and the other devotees, wearing thorny crowns of twigs, carried heavy wooden crosses on their backs for more than a kilometer (more than half a mile) in the brutal heat. Village actors dressed as Roman centurions later hammered 4-inch (10-centimeter) stainless steel nails through his palms and feet, then set him aloft on a cross under the sun for about 10 minutes.

contributed to gas and food prices soaring worldwide.

"It's just these two countries involved in that war, Russia and Ukraine, but all of us are being affected by the higher oil prices even if we're not involved in that war," said Enaje.

Ahead of the crucifixions, Enaje told The Associated Press that the steep increases in oil and food prices after Russia invaded Ukraine made it harder for him to stretch his meager income from carpentry and sign making.

Thousands of people, including foreign tourists, came to watch the annual religious spectacle in San Pedro Cutud and two other nearby rural villages.

Kitty Ennett, a veterinarian from Ireland, said the crucifixions were "a very religious experience" and they were worth the long trip from her home in the United Kingdom.

"When I was seeing the young man doing the flogging and going up to the cross, it's very moving to see how much

Nailed to a cross, Filipino prays for Ukraine war to end

SAN PEDRO CUTUD, Philippines (AP)—Eight Filipinos were nailed to crosses to reenact Jesus Christ's suffering in a bloody Good Friday tradition, including a carpenter, who was crucified for the 34th time with a prayer for Russia's invasion of Ukraine to end because it has made poor people like him more desperate.

The real-life crucifixions in the farming village of San Pedro Cutud in Pampanga province north of Manila resumed after a three-year pause due to the coronavirus pandemic. About a dozen villagers registered but only eight people showed up, including 62-year-old carpenter and sign painter Ruben Enaje, who screamed as he was nailed to a wooden cross with a large crowd watching in the scorching summer heat.

In a news conference shortly after his crucifixion, Enaje said he prayed for the eradication of the COVID-19 virus and the end of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has

World

Ukraine attacks continue amid Easter pleas for peace

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Weekend shelling by Russian forces killed at least seven civilians, Ukrainian officials reported Sunday as Pope Francis and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby used their traditional Easter messages to highlight the war in Ukraine and other conflicts around the world.

While Russia continued to concentrate on seizing all of Ukraine's industrial east, two other provinces — Kharkiv in the northeast and Zaporizhzhia in the southeast — came under missile, rocket and artillery fire, the Ukrainian military reported. The governor of the Kherson region, Oleksandr Prokudin, said two communities there were hit by bombs from warplanes late Sunday, but he did not immediately report any casualties.

Kharkiv governor Oleh Syniehubov said two men died Sunday in shelling in Kupiansk, a city that Russia held before Ukrainian forces regained control of almost all of the province.

The city remained under attack later Sunday as Russian forces target-

ed residential areas with multiple rocket launchers, Syniehubov said. Elsewhere in the province, a 30-year-old man was hospitalized in serious condition after Russian shelling of the city of Chuhuiv, he said on Telegram.

Shelling also killed two people overnight, one of them a child born in 2012, in the city of Zaporizhzhia, the capital of that province, City Council Secretary Anatoliy Kurtev said.

The Zaporizhzhia region's governor, Yuriy Malashko, said 18 communities in all were shelled. Three people were killed and five were wounded on Saturday, Malashko said.

Zaporizhzhia is home to Europe's largest nuclear power plant and one of four Ukrainian provinces that Russian President Vladimir Putin illegally annexed in September. Since then, Russia's military has sought to oust Ukraine's troops from those areas, especially Luhansk and Donetsk provinces, which make up the industrial region known as the Donbas.

Bakhmut, a city in Don-

estsk, has seen the 13-month war's longest battle. Western analysts have said Russian forces recently made it into the center of the city. Seizing Bakhmut after more than eight months would give the Kremlin a badly wanted victory and a path to push on toward bigger Ukrainian-held cities.

The Russian army is moving elite units to Bakhmut, Col. Serhiy Cherevaty, a spokesperson for Ukraine's Eastern Group of Forces, said Sunday.

Cherevaty said the Wagner Group, a private Russian military company whose fighters have spearheaded the offensive on Bakhmut, was incurring heavy losses, making it necessary to move in regular army units from the regular army, including paratroopers and motorized riflemen.

The vast majority of Ukrainians with a religious affiliation identify as Orthodox Christian, a faith that observes Easter on April 16 this year. Some Catholics celebrated Easter on Sunday, while Orthodox churches marked Palm Sunday this weekend.

Pope at Easter: Pray for Ukrainian, Russian people, refugees

VATICAN CITY (AP)—In an Easter message highlighting hope, Pope Francis on Sunday invoked prayers for both the Ukrainian and Russian people, praised nations which welcome refugees and called on Israelis and Palestinians wracked by the latest surge in deadly violence to forge a "climate of trust."

Francis, along with dozens of prelates and tens of thousands of faithful, celebrated Easter Mass in a flower-adorned St. Peter's Square, affirming the Christian belief that Jesus rose from the dead days after his crucifixion.

The 86-year-old pontiff topped the celebration with a traditional speech about troubled places in the world. Encouraging "trust among individuals, peoples and nations," Francis said Easter's joy "illuminates the darkness and gloom in which, all too often, our world finds itself enveloped."

The pope's Easter message is known by its Latin name, "Urbi et Orbi," which means "to the city and the world."

Since Russia invaded

neighboring Ukraine in February 2022, Francis has repeatedly called for the fighting to end and sought prayers for the "martyred" Ukrainian people.

Ukrainian diplomats have complained that he hasn't come down hard enough in his statements on Russia and particularly Russian President Vladimir Putin as the Vatican tries to avoid alienating Moscow.

"Help the beloved Ukrainian people on their journey towards peace, and shed the light of Easter upon the people of Russia," Francis implored God in his Easter speech, which he delivered while sitting in a chair on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica facing the square. "Comfort the wounded and all those who have lost loved ones because of the war, and grant that prisoners may return safe and sound to their families."

He urged the international community to work to end the war in Ukraine and "all conflict and bloodshed in the world, beginning with Syria,

which still awaits peace."

Francis also prayed for those who lost loved ones in an earthquake that struck Syria and Turkey two months ago, claiming tens of thousands of lives.

With a renewal in deadly violence affecting both Israelis and Palestinians in recent days, Francis called for a "resumption of dialogue, in a climate of trust and reciprocal respect, between Israelis and Palestinians, so that peace may reign in the Holy City and in the entire region," a reference to Jerusalem.

But Francis also noted progress on some fronts.

"Let us rejoice at the concrete signs of hope that reach us from so many countries, beginning with those that offers assistance and welcome to all fleeing war and poverty," he said, without naming any particular nations.

How to care for asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees, and whether to allow them entrance, is a raging political and social debate in much of Europe, as well in the United States and elsewhere.

Overdrive

All-new 2024 Subaru Impreza is the sports car for everyday life

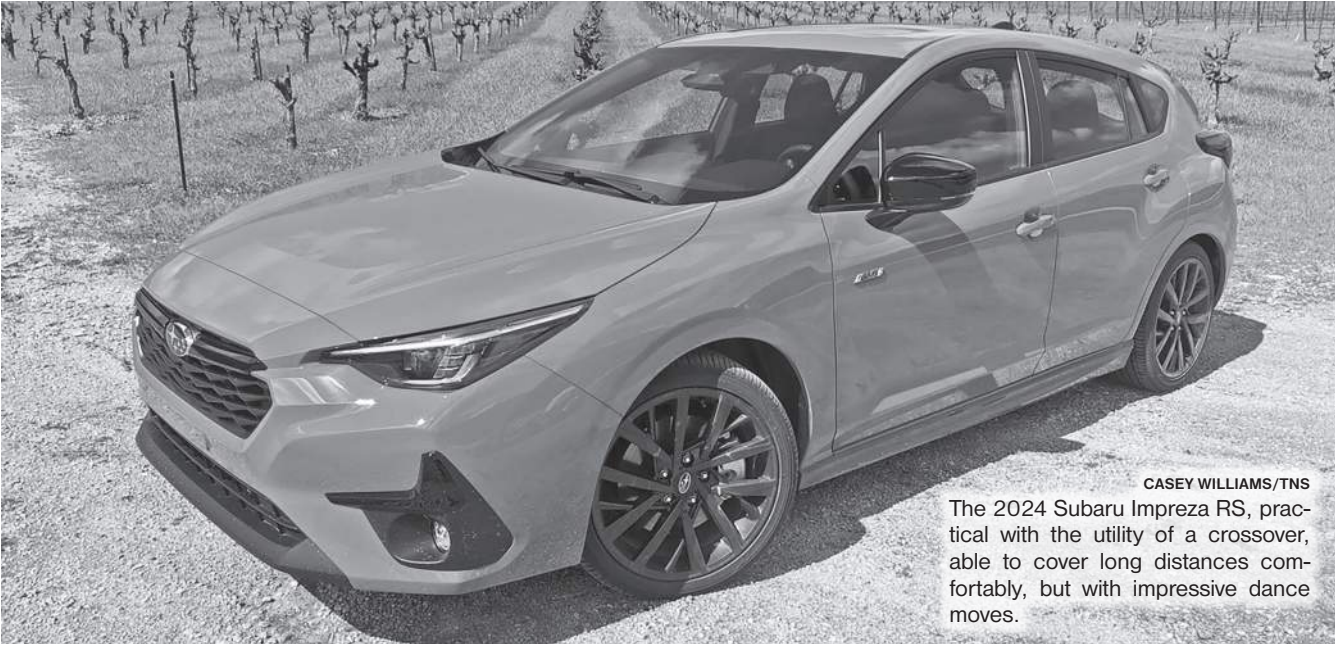
By CASEY WILLIAMS
Tribune News Service

Spring has finally come to California wine country, and I'm clipping through tight two-lane roads through vineyards and wineries around Paso Robles. I'm doing my best to keep eyes on the road, but the greenery and mountains are simply magical. Yet, the roads and this car demand attention lest I end up a visitor center lawn ornament.

As invigorating is the drive, this little hatchback could just as easily take Miles and Maisey to cello lessons. I'm driving the completely redesigned 2024 Subaru Impreza RS.

From the hotel carpark, it didn't look dramatically different from the outgoing model. The grille is wider and narrower, fenders have more form, and aero panels have been added underside to enhance fuel economy. Base and Sport models look handsome, but the RS is my favorite with 18-inch dark alloy wheels, black trim, vivid Oasis Blue Pearl paint and RS logos that incorporate horizontally opposed piston heads in reference to its Boxer engine.

Sedans have been eliminated, leaving just hatchbacks. Only about a quarter of Imprezas were sedans anyway, but customers made clear they wanted a sporty car that could accommodate their active lifestyles. Hiking, running and spending time with pets are favorite activities. A wide rear threshold and mounting points for a roof rack allow easy loading of kayaks and bicycles too. Lift the hatch, fold



CASEY WILLIAMS/TNS
The 2024 Subaru Impreza RS, practical with the utility of a crossover, able to cover long distances comfortably, but with impressive dance moves.

rear seats, and toss gear into a cavernous crossover space. A bicycle – or cello – should fit.

Up front, there's a new tablet-sized infotainment touchscreen with auxiliary buttons/knobs for key climate functions, volume and tuning. Wireless Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and console charging easily connect phones. Seats heat faster, Harman Kardon audio sounds sweeter, and the power sunroof makes the interior brighter. Additional sound insulation quiells engine noise. Step up to the RS for red seat accents and alloy pedals. Safety, a Subaru hallmark, is enhanced with a new three-camera EyeSight system to better employ automatic emergency braking, lane keep assist, and newly added crash-avoidance steering.

Putting the sport into utility are two available powertrains: Base models with a 152 horsepower 2.0-liter four-cylinder or the RS with

a 2.5-liter four-cylinder developing 182 horsepower. Both connect to continuously variable automatic transmissions. If given a choice, I'd take the 2.5 and not just for power. It only gives up 1-MPG (rated 26/33-MPG city/hwy) and gains 30 horsepower. Pretty easy choice. There's no manual transmission, but you can paddle-shift eight pre-set ratios to better connect with the car in the twisties.

A 10% stiffer body structure allowed engineers to recalibrate the suspension to firmly grab corners by the scruff and also be more compliant during daily commutes and long trips. Tip the car into a corner and you notice how the horizontally opposed engine keeps weight balanced low in the chassis, torque-shifting all-wheel-drive solidly connects to road, and the all-capable WRX's power steering provides precise feedback. This car can do very sports

car things competently without any penalty during regular use.

Back at the hotel, sipping wine after a day of driving spirited enough for some of my compatriots to become ill and require a snack of Dramamine, the Impreza came into focus. It's a practical car with the utility of a crossover, able to cover long distances comfortably, but with impressive dance moves. The 2.5-liter engine is more powerful than the 2.0-liter engine, and it could certainly use more power, but this car is more about finesse than straight-line acceleration. And, that's what should be the RS. Besides, if you want a turbo, Subaru will happily sell you a WRX.

Funny enough, this isn't my first drive in a Subaru 2.5-liter RS. Way back in May 2000, before there was a U.S.-version WRX, I drove a 2.5 RS sedan. It was only the second Subaru I had ever driven.

Even then it was a special car, endowed with 162 horsepower Boxer four-cylinder engine, able to run 0-60 mph in 8.2 seconds, and shifting power to standard AWD through a 5-speed manual transmission. I'd like to have that manual on the new RS, because paddles only go so far, but would toss the rest too sweet for the 2024 edition.

So, what does the overhauled Impreza cost? Base models start at \$22,995. Step up to the Sport for \$24,995 or the resurrected RS for \$27,885. All offer incredible value, utility and driving enjoyment without penalties of a true sports car.



CASEY WILLIAMS/TNS
Interior of the 2024 Subaru Impreza RS offers a new tablet-sized infotainment touchscreen with auxiliary buttons/knobs for key climate functions, volume and tuning.

NUTS & BOLTS

2024 Subaru Impreza RS
Five-passenger, AWD Hatchback

Powertrain:
2.5-liter I4, CVT

Output:
182hp/178 lb.-ft. torque

Suspension f/r:
Ind/Ind

Wheels f/r:
18"/18" alloy

Brakes f/r: disc/disc

Fuel economy: 26/33 mpg city/hwy

Assembly:
Gunma, Japan

Base/As-tested price:
\$22,995/\$27,885

Which oil filters can I use?

Q : I have a question about oil filters. I change my own oil on two Chevrolets. They use the same filter. One is a 1996 truck, the other is a 2001 S10 blazer. When I buy filters at parts stores, the filters say for synthetic oil. I use semi-synthetic oil. Is it OK to use those full synthetic filters with semi-synthetic oil?

B.M., Colorado Springs, Colorado

A: Sure. All oil filters are compatible with all types of oil. Generally, the higher priced filters have better filtration, down to 25 microns or less. (A micron is a millionth of a meter.) This is important for anyone who wants to stretch their oil change intervals when using synthetic oils that claim extended life.

■■■

Q: We received a recall issue that has not been fixed and the local dealer offers no explanation or timeline for solutions. Apparently, the fuse box can suddenly catch fire because something in the Kia trailer hitch system is wrong. Of course, we purchased the hitch from the dealer who installed it. Do you have any information on this issue? We assume there is no issue while our trailer remains parked in the garage, but we would like to be able to use our camper soon, and we are worried that we may be injured or worse if this problem comes to light while we're on the road.

P.C., Clarendon Hills, Illinois

Q: We own a 2021 Hyundai Palisade, which we purchased new. We purchased a factory hitch and had it installed. Last summer we received a recall notice regarding the trailer hitch on this model. After the dealer inspection and remedy, we learned that only the wiring harness was recalled and that was disabled by removing an in-line fuse. Now we have an excellent, travel-worthy vehicle with a heavy-duty trailer hitch that cannot be used safely or legally! Neither the dealer nor Hyundai can give me any information regarding when or if a new wiring harness will be available for our car. What are my options? On behalf of all your readers, and for this inquiry especially, thanks for your expert advice and information.

C.S., Westchester, Illinois

A: Park the car outside. It is not the fuse panel, but the trailer hitch on some Kia and Hyundai SUVs and minivans. According to Consumer Reports vehicle owners "should park outside and away from structures because there is a risk that a fault within the harness could cause a fire even when the vehicle is parked and turned off. The problem is due to a faulty printed circuit board inside the trailer hitch that can cause a short circuit and lead to a fire."

■■■

Q: I own a 2015 Audi Q7 with 108,487 miles on it. I have

MOTORMOUTH

BY BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. Weber's work has appeared in professional trade magazines and various consumer publications including Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.



been told by numerous people to dump the car as soon as possible because it will start failing miserably and cost me a fortune. I have heard, and do know from experience, that Audis are very expensive to fix, but I love my car (and have no car payments). Should I ditch it and never buy another Audi?

M.M., Peabody, Massachusetts

A: You are right about the cost of repairs, but my hunch is that you won't need them anytime soon. Today's cars are designed to go 200,000 before any major failures. If you compare the price of a new Audi to the trade in value of your Q7, keeping it, even if it needs minor stuff, may be your best option. The choice, of course, is yours.

Life & Style

Ellie Goulding thinks we all need to be more selfish

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Throughout her career, Ellie Goulding has been candid about the drawbacks of fame. Although she remembers being a self-conscious teenager, Goulding said her struggles with panic attacks, anxiety and insecurity about how she looks were exacerbated in the early stages of her stardom.

"I was kind of thrust into this world," she recalled. "I didn't really get a chance to sort of do that thing that everyone gets to do where they kind of come out of that teenage phase, like start to find yourself."

But as Goulding gears up to release her fifth studio album, "Higher Than Heaven," on Friday, the British pop star declared she is done caring about what other people think.

"I can't allow those comments and those opinions to affect me. I can't. Life is too

short," Goulding said in a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press. "I think we all need to be way more selfish and stop doing things for other people."

But even as she professes to put herself first more, Goulding does want to use her clout to speak up for those "who don't have a voice," including the people most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and the planet itself.

As she finalizes the details of her upcoming tour, the outspoken climate activist and U.N. Environment goodwill ambassador is putting her money where her mouth is by only agreeing to play venues that can meet her standards of environmentally sustainable practices.

"We're trying to figure out a tour that's very green and has the smallest possible carbon footprint," she said. "I really care about that stuff



CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP
Singer Ellie Goulding poses for a portrait, Monday, March 13, 2023, in Los Angeles.

a powerful thing," she said. "I was doing it all the time and then I stopped. And suddenly my anxiety came back and I felt something was really missing."

While she is happy to return to the familiarity of performing and making electronic music, a genre she said she grew up on, Goulding mused that she would consider new collaborators and possibly even new styles of music in the future.

"I think for the next album I might experiment a bit," she said.

"My voice carries everything I do and so, I feel like I could put out a classical album tomorrow and people would be like, 'Yeah, that's Ellie, isn't it?' So, I feel like I can get away with that," she laughed.

Goulding's outlook on pleasing others isn't the only thing that has undergone profound shifts since the singer rose to fame more than a decade ago. In that time, the way people listen to and discover music has fundamentally changed, as well as the way artists are often expected to engage with fans.

"I do feel a little bit lucky that I came through as an artist in a time when there was no social media," the 36-year-old said as she reflected on the current ubiquity of platforms like TikTok and Instagram and the influence they have on the music industry.

Although she is looking forward to fans hearing the "uplifting, upbeat" sound of "Higher Than Heaven," Goulding said her expectations surrounding album releases have been tempered in recent years.

and it just takes a little bit more time and energy and effort to figure it all out."

Goulding is cognizant of the amount of pollution and waste that results from a typical tour, from the travel involved to the merchandise sold and large quantities of plastic used.

"There's like so much plastic backstage," she said.

But for her, the extra work is worth it to return to the stage. Like many artists at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, Goulding was unable to take her last album on tour when it was released in July 2020.

"As a performer, I didn't realize how much it was really holding me together. Even just the act of singing is really

'The Super Mario Bros. Movie' is a box office smash

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

Audiences said let's go to the movie theater for "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" this weekend. The animated offering from Universal and Illumination powered up with \$204.6 million in its first five days in 4,343 North American theaters, including \$146.4 million over the weekend, according to studio estimates on Sunday.

With an estimated \$173 million in international earnings and a global total of \$377 million, "Mario" broke records for video game adaptations (passing "Warcraft's" \$210

million) and animated films ("Frozen 2's" \$358 million).

Its global total makes it the biggest opening of 2023 and the second biggest three-day domestic animated opening (behind "Finding Dory"). It's also a record for Illumination, the animation shop behind successful franchises like "Minions," which has made over \$5 billion from its 13 films.

"This partnership between Nintendo and Illumination is just incredible and led to this extraordinary performance," said Jim Orr, Universal's president of domestic distribution.

The PG-rated "Mario" is an origin story of Brooklyn plumbers Mario, voiced by Chris Pratt, and Luigi (Charlie Day), who fall into a pipe and come out in another world full of Nintendo's most famous characters, from Bowser (Jack Black) to Princess Peach (Anya Taylor-Joy). Critics were largely mixed. "Mario" currently has a 56% on Rotten Tomatoes. But audiences were more favorable, giving it an A CinemaScore.

Orr said that theater owners were surprised by just how broad the audiences were and reported seeing

some ticket buyers decked out in character costumes for the movie. According to exit polls, 59% of the audience was male and 45% were between the ages of 18 and 34.

"\$377 million worldwide is just astounding and a testament to how important outside of the home activities are for families," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "Kids and their parents collectively were able to go out, have an outside the home event for the whole family at a relatively bargain price compared to a trip or a sporting event."

Marriage is strained by MIL's gambling addiction

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been happily married for 28 years. We rarely have a problem we can't settle, but I'm stymied over this issue. His 72-year-old mother took up gambling several years back, and it has become an issue. Over the past year, she has been asking us for "loans" of \$300 to \$500 to cover her gambling losses. More than once, she has told us for weeks on end not to cash the check she gave us to repay us. We were late paying our insurance because she has yet to repay us. This is stressing me out.

We have financial responsibilities of our own. We both work, but we are not wealthy. We have medical bills, as well as car and house payments. We have children attending college. I tell my husband that we are not a loan institution for his family. I feel he is enabling his mother by lending her money. I think she needs to suffer the consequences of her behavior. I'm willing to pay a bill for her, but giving her an open-ended loan is not, in my opinion, the right thing to do. Why can't he tell her no? I don't want her to come between us. It has already affected my feelings toward her. I know she's an addict, but she doesn't seem to want to stop. I work too hard for my money to throw it away. What should we do?

NOT A BANK IN INDIANA

DEAR NOT A BANK: If you continue down the path your husband has put you both on, it will eventually damage your credit score and possibly your marriage. His mother may, indeed, be addicted to the rush she derives when she gambles. This is why, even when she runs out of money, she's unable to call it quits. For everyone's sake, it's imperative that you stop being her enablers. A support group for families of gambling addicts could be helpful for you and your spouse. If there isn't one nearby, find another 12-step group for family members of addicts and attend the meetings. They may help your husband understand the importance of no longer allowing his mother to make her problem yours.

■■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I need help. For 10 years I have worked in the deli department at a grocery store and try my very best to get things done. My problem is my boss. She nitpicks and criticizes me to the point that I get so frustrated and angry I can't focus on work. Abby, I have Asperger's syndrome, so it's tough to socialize with customers I don't know. Half the time when she starts in on me, I become so rattled I can't finish my task. She accuses me of wearing clothes that aren't clean even though I wash them every day. I don't want to do anything I'm going to regret later. Any advice you can give me will be appreciated.

LOSING IT IN HAWAII

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR LOSING IT: Because you feel you are being discriminated against by the person who heads your department, make an appointment to talk privately with the store manager to discuss what's going on. If, after that, you continue to be picked on, contact Legal Aid at Work (bit.ly/3G2zTDu, or call their helpline: 877-350-5441) and talk to someone there. I wish you luck.

■■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Celtics, Bulls, Nets win on final day of NBA regular season



TORONTO (AP)—Gary Trent Jr. scored 23 points, Precious Achiuwa had 14 points and 13 rebounds and the Toronto Raptors beat the Milwaukee Bucks 121-105 on Sunday in a matchup of short-handed teams whose postseason fates already were sealed.

Bobby Portis Jr. scored 16 points for the Bucks, Jae Crowder had 13 and Meyers Leonard had 10 points and 12 rebounds.

Lindell Wiggington scored 17 points, and Goran Dragic and Thanasis Antetokounmpo each had 14 for Milwaukee, which finished the regular season 58-24.

Malachi Flynn scored a season-high 20 points for the Raptors, who finished 41-41 for the second time in team history.

NUGGETS 109, KINGS 95

DENVER (AP), Bruce Brown had a team-high 21 points and six assists, Zeke Nnaji added 18 points and seven rebounds off the bench, and the short-handed Denver rallied from a 17-point first-quarter deficit to end a three-game skid.

The Nuggets played without their top four scorers — Nikola Jokic (right calf tightness), Jamal Murray (right thumb sprain), Michael Porter Jr. (left heel injury) and Aaron Gordon (right shoulder inflammation). The Kings came out with their traditional starting lineup, but after taking a 67-59 lead into halftime, De'Aaron Fox, Domantas Sabonis and Harrison Barnes, three of the team's top four scorers, didn't play for the rest of the afternoon.

The Kings, who came into the game as the NBA's highest-scoring team, shot just 35% in the final three quarters. Despite sitting for the final 24 minutes, Barnes finished with a team-high 17 points.

CLIPPERS 119, SUNS 114

PHOENIX (AP)—Norman Powell scored 29 points, Russell Westbrook had 25 and the Los Angeles Clippers rallied to secure the No. 5 seed in the NBA's Western Conference playoff bracket.

The teams will meet again in the first round of the playoffs. The Suns are the No. 4 seed and will host the Clippers in Game 1.

The Clippers trailed by 10 points late in the third quarter, eventually cutting the margin to 86-82 going into the fourth. Kawhi Leonard finished with 25 points, including 12 in the fourth.

The Suns had just nine available players and sat four of their five starters, including Chris Paul, Devin Booker,



Boston Celtics center Luke Kornet (40) celebrates after scoring in the second half of an NBA basketball game as Atlanta Hawks forward Bruno Fernando (24) looks on, Sunday, April 9, 2023, in Boston.

Kevin Durant and Deandre Ayton. Saben Lee scored a career-high 25 points and finished with nine assists for the Suns.

THUNDER 115, GRIZZLIES 100

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Tre Mann scored 24 points and career highs of 12 rebounds and 12 assists, notching his first career triple-double, and Oklahoma City defeated Memphis in the regular-season finale.

Jared Butler scored a career-high 25 points and Olivier Sarr added 22 points and a career-best 15 rebounds for the Thunder, who finished with a 40-42 record after going 24-58 last season.

Kenneth Lofton Jr. scored a career-high 42 points and grabbed 14 rebounds for Memphis. Ziaire Williams added career-bests of 24 points and nine assists for the Grizzlies.

Both teams were locked into their seeds in the Western Conference before the tip — Memphis at No. 2 and Oklahoma City at No. 10 — so key players for both teams sat out. Memphis' Ja Morant, Desmond Bane, Jaren Jackson Jr. and Dillon Brooks and Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Jalen Williams, Josh Giddey and Lu Dort were among those who did not play.

WARRIORS 157, TRAIL BLAZERS 101

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Golden State set an NBA record by scoring 55 points in the first quarter and secured the sixth seed in the Western Conference.

Klay Thompson, who scored 20 points, became the third player in NBA history

to hit at least 300 3-pointers in a single season. Teammate Stephen Curry, who did it four times, and James Harden are the other two players.

Curry led the Warriors with 26 points and hit five three-pointers to go along with five rebounds. Moses Moody added 25 points off the bench, while Jordan Poole had 21 points and four rebounds for Golden State.

Skylar Mays led Portland with 21 points along with 11 assists. Shaedon Sharpe had 18 points, seven rebounds and four assists, and Jeena-then Williams added 17 points in the Blazers' final game of the season.

CELTICS 120, HAWKS 114

BOSTON (AP)—Payton Pritchard finished with his first career triple-double with 30 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists and Boston beat Atlanta in a matchup of mostly reserves.

Boston went 25 of 54 on 3-point attempts. Pritchard connected on 9 of 16, Mike Muscala went 4-for-7 on 3s and finished with 27 points and Sam Hauser was 8 of 14 on 3s with 26 points.

Garrison Mathews and Bruno Fernando led the Hawks with 19 points apiece.

Locked into the Eastern Conference's eighth seed, the Hawks will be at the Miami Heat on Tuesday in a play-in game. Boston, the East's No. 2 seed, will face the winner of the Heat-Hawks series in the opening round.

BULLS 103, PISTONS 81

CHICAGO (AP)—Zach LaVine scored 17 points and DeMar DeRozan added 16 to

help Chicago end the regular season with a win over Detroit.

Chicago plays in Toronto on Wednesday in an elimination game in the NBA's play-in tournament.

Killian Hayes had 26 points and Jaden Ivey scored 16 for the Pistons, who finished an NBA-worst 17-65.

76ERS 134, NETS 105

NEW YORK (AP)—Shake Milton scored 20 points and chased Cam Thomas all over the floor in the fourth quarter to keep him at 46, and Philadelphia beat Brooklyn. The teams face each other next weekend to begin the first round of the NBA playoffs.

Mikal Bridges was the only starter for either team to play, and he did so for just four seconds. It was his 83rd game starting this season, extending his streak to 392 straight to begin his career. Then he committed a foul and left the game.

LAKERS 128, JAZZ 117

LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James hit eight 3-pointers while scoring 36 points, Anthony Davis had 16 points and 13 rebounds, and the Los Angeles Lakers surged into the postseason as the seventh seed in the Western Conference.

D'Angelo Russell had 17 points for the Lakers, who won nine of their last 11 games and went 18-9 after revamping their roster at the trade deadline. Los Angeles will host Minnesota in a play-in game on Tuesday night.

Kris Dunn had 26 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists while Kelly Olynyk scored 23 points for the Jazz, who wrapped up their first non-playoff season in seven years with their ninth loss in 11

games. Simone Fontecchio added 20 points for Utah.

TIMBERWOLVES 113, PELICANS 108

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Anthony Edwards had 26 points, 13 rebounds, four steals and four blocks to lead Minnesota past the Pelicans in the play-in tournament seeding after losing a pair of starters to anger management problems.

Rudy Gobert threw a punch at teammate Kyle Anderson late in the second quarter and was dismissed for the rest of the game, after Jaden McDaniels hurt his right hand by hitting a wall in frustration. But Taurean Prince pitched in 18 points off the bench and the Timberwolves rallied from a 14-point deficit.

Minnesota finished in eighth place and will travel to Los Angeles to play the surging seventh-place Lakers in the play-in tournament on Tuesday night.

Brandon Ingram finished with 42 points and 12 rebounds for the Pelicans. C.J. McCollum added 23 points and Trey Murphy III scored 20 points.

New Orleans fell to ninth place and will host 10th-place Oklahoma City in an elimination game on Wednesday night.

HORNETS 106, CAVALIERS 95

CLEVELAND (AP)—Mark Williams had 22 points and 10 rebounds and fellow rookie Bryce McGowens scored 22 points as Charlotte rallied in the fourth quarter to beat the playoff-bound Cleveland.

Theo Maledon had 18 points, eight rebounds and six assists for Charlotte, which finished with the fourth-worst record in the NBA at 27-55 and did not advance to the postseason for the seventh year in a row.

All-Star Donovan Mitchell and Darius Garland were not in uniform for the fourth-seeded Cavaliers. Sam Merrill scored 17 points and Danny Green and Raul Neto each had 13. Cleveland blew an 11-point lead and finished the regular season 51-31. The Cavs play the Knicks in the first round of the playoffs.

HEAT 123, MAGIC 110

MIAMI (AP)—Udonis Haslem scored 24 points in his final regular-season game, Duncan Robinson added 20 and Miami tuned up for its game against the Atlanta Hawks in the play-in tournament by beating Orlando.

It was Haslem's highest-scoring game since he had 28 points on Nov. 14, 2009. He is retiring and checked out for the final time with

58.9 seconds left. Miami got a franchise-record 111 points off its bench.

Kevon Harris scored 22 for Orlando, while Caleb Houstan added 21 and Chuma Okeke scored 14.

PACERS 141, KNICKS 136

NEW YORK (AP)—Benne-dict Mathurin scored 26 points and was one of seven Pacers who had double-digit points in Indiana's win over New York.

The Pacers completed the regular season with three wins in their final 10 games to finish the season 35-47.

Obi Toppin scored a game-high 34 for New York, which finished the regular season with a 47-35 record, and the fifth seed in the Eastern Conference. They will meet fourth seed Cleveland in the first round. Immanuel Quickley added 30 points for the Knicks.

SPURS 138, MAVERICKS 117

DALLAS (AP)—Sandro Mamukelashvili scored 23 points, and San Antonio sent Dallas into an offseason of uncertainty with a victory over the Mavericks in a meaningless, reserve-filled finale.

Luka Doncic, Kyrie Irving and four other regulars were out for Dallas, which is being investigated by the NBA for similar roster decisions two days earlier against Chicago. The Mavericks still had a shot at the final Western Conference play-in spot before blowing an 11-point lead in the fourth quarter of a loss to the Bulls.

The Spurs sat nine players, but they've been out of contention for months and were already locked in to the best draft lottery odds at 14%, along with Detroit and Houston, in the Victor Wembanyama sweepstakes.

Dominick Barlow scored 21 points, and Malaki Branham added 20 for the Spurs. Rookie Jaden Hardy led Dallas with 25 points.

ROCKETS 114, WIZARDS 109

WASHINGTON (AP)—Jabari Smith Jr. scored 20 points for Houston, which went on a 12-0 run late in the fourth quarter to top Washington. Neither team will be in the playoffs.

The Rockets won four of their last five games to finish 22-60. Washington played without Bradley Beal, Kristaps Porzingis and Kyle Kuzma down the stretch and lost five of its last six to finish 35-47.

Jordan Goodwin led Washington with 22 points, Quenton Jackson added 19 and Corey Kispert scored 18.

Rays at 9-0, best MLB start since 2003, after 11-0 rout



ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.

(AP)—The Tampa Bay Rays are putting together one of the best starts ever.

The Rays routed the Oakland Athletics 11-0 Sunday to improve to 9-0 as Drew Rasmussen combined on a one-hitter and Brandon Lowe hit a grand slam. Tampa Bay is the first team to win its first nine games since the 2003 Kansas City Royals.

“Essentially, everything is going exactly the way that we want to,” Lowe said. “This is incredible baseball that we’re playing.”

Tampa Bay has outscored opponents 75-18, scoring the most runs in the big leagues and allowing the fewest.

“It just opens things up,” Rasmussen said of the Rays’ offense. “The way they’re going right now, it’s unbelievable.”

The Rays have won every game by four or more runs, trailing only a 13-game run by the 1884 St. Louis Maroons of the Union Association as the longest at a season’s start. The streak is the longest at any point of a season since 10 by the 1939 New York Yankees.

The longest winning streak at a season’s start is 13 by the 1982 Atlanta Braves and 1987 Milwaukee Brewers.

Oakland has lost seven of nine. The Athletics were outscored 22-0 in the final two games of the series and limited to four hits, dropping their batting average to .192. The team ERA jumped from 7.00 to 7.54.

The Athletics run differential of minus-45 through nine games is the third worse since 1900, only behind the 1955 Kansas City Athletics (minus-55) and the 1988 Baltimore Orioles (minus-48).

“I think we’ve got to put this series behind us,” Oakland manager Mark Kotsay said. “We’ll talk about it, how we get better going forward.”

Wander Franco and Harold Ramirez also homered for the Rays, who have hit a big league-leading 24 long balls.

Rasmussen (2-0) allowed his only runner on Ramon Laureano’s two-out double in the second and has given up three hits over 13 scoreless innings in two starts. He struck out eight and walked none.

Ryan Thompson got three straight outs, and Jason Adam worked around a leadoff walk in the ninth.

James Kaprielian (0-1) allowed seven runs, seven hits and three walks over 4 2/3 innings. Oakland pitchers walked seven and hit two batters.

“It’s fundamentals that we’re failing at right now,” Kotsay said. “Again, today we walk seven, hit two, so the storyline here is we need to be better on



A Tampa Bay Rays fan holds up a sign during the ninth inning of a baseball game against the Oakland Athletics Sunday, April 9, 2023, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

the mound as well.”

Lowe’s drive was the only hit in the fourth to leave the infield as Tampa Bay took a 5-0 lead.

BLUE JAYS 12, ANGELS 11, 10 INNINGS

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Tim Mayza retired Shohei Ohtani with the bases loaded for the final out, and Toronto got five RBIs apiece from Matt Chapman and No. 9 hitter Kev- in Kiermaier.

Chapman, who leads the majors with a .475 batting average, hit a grand slam in the sixth. Kiermaier doubled home the tiebreaking run against Carlos Estevez (0-1) in the 10th for the Blue Jays, who overcame a 6-0 deficit and wasted a 10-6 lead.

Ohtani hit one of Los Angeles’ four homers, but he grounded out to end it as Toronto took two of three in the series and finished 6-4 on its season-opening trip.

Hunter Renfro, Brandon Drury and Logan O’Hoppe also went deep for the Angels.

Jordan Romano (1-0) got the win and Mayza got his first save.

PADRES 10, BRAVES 2

ATLANTA (AP)—Nelson Cruz hit a three-run homer and drove in six runs, and San Diego earned its third consecutive victory for the second time this season.

At 42 years and 282 days, Cruz became the second-oldest player to homer for the Padres, just one day younger than Rickey Henderson was when he went deep on Oct. 4, 2001. It was the most RBIs for Cruz since he drove in seven on July 26, 2020, for Minnesota against the Chicago White Sox.

Seth Lugo (2-0) pitched six effective innings for San Diego, and Ha-Seong Kim hit a two-run homer. Manny Machado finished with three hits.

Dodd (1-1), making his second career start, fell behind 6-0 in the fifth when Juan Soto and

Cruz hit consecutive doubles. The lefty gave up 10 hits and seven runs in 4 1/3 innings.

YANKEES 5, ORIOLES 3

BALTIMORE (AP)—Aaron Judge homered twice and Nestor Cortes (2-0) allowed two runs and four hits in 5 1/3 innings after umpires forced him to blot out a marking on his glove.

Judge hit solo homers in the third inning off Tyler Wells (0-1) and the eighth off Logan Gilmartin for his 28th multihomer game and first this season. Judge is batting .364 and has four homers in nine games after hitting his fourth in the 17th game last year en route to an American League-record 62.

Franchy Cordero also went deep for the Yankees, who have homered in their first nine games for the fourth time. Off to a 6-3 start, New York has won its first three series for just the third time in 20 years.

Clay Holmes got his third save.

PIRATES 1, WHITE SOX 0

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Pirates shortstop Oneil Cruz fractured his left ankle in a home-plate collision with catcher Seby Zavala in the sixth inning.

Johan Oviedo (1-0) allowed five hits—all singles—and struck out five in 6 2/3 innings as Pittsburgh won for the fifth time in six games.

Canaan Smith-Njigba tripled in the second and scored on Jack Suwinski’s sacrifice fly off Michael Kopech (0-2).

David Bednar worked around a two-out single by Gavin Sheets in the ninth for his fourth save.

RED SOX 4, TIGERS 1

DETROIT (AP)—Triston Casas homered and hit an RBI double as Boston finished a three-game sweep, outscoring Detroit 24-9.

Kutter Crawford (1-1) allowed one run and five hits in five innings and Kenley Jansen pitched the ninth for his second save. Detroit loaded the bases with one out, but Zach McKinsty flied out and Akil Baddoo struck out.

Red Sox outfielder Adam Duvall, hitting .455 with four homers and 14 RBIs, left in the ninth after injuring his left wrist while diving for Spencer Torkelson’s bloop single.

Matthew Boyd (0-1) yielded two runs on five hits and four walks in 4 1/3 innings as Detroit fell to 2-7.

REDS 6, PHILLIES 4

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Jake Fraley hit a bases-clearing double in the ninth off Seranthony Dominguez (0-1) to overcome a 4-3 deficit as Cincinnati avoided a three-game sweep.

Alec Bohm hit a two-run homer for the Phillies.

Kevin Herget (1-0) tossed two innings of scoreless relief and Ian Gibaut struck out two in a perfect ninth for his first save.

ASTROS 5, TWINS 1

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Chas McCormick had four RBIs and Hunter Brown (1-1) allowed an unearned run and two hits in seven innings, combining on a two-hitter as Houston salvaged the series finale.

The defending World Series champions are 4-6 after winning for just the second time in seven games.

Tyler Mahle (1-1) gave up four runs and eight hits in six innings.

RANGERS 8, CUBS 2

CHICAGO (AP)—No. 9 hitter Bubba Thompson had a triple, double and two RBIs as Texas stopped a two-game slide.

Leadoff man Marcus Semien doubled among two hits and drove in three runs as the Rangers rebounded from an error-filled 10-3 loss.

Jon Gray scattered six hits in

5 2/3 innings and Will Smith, Cole Ragans and José Leclerc followed with 3 1/3 scoreless, one-hit innings.

Jameson Taillon (0-2) allowed five runs, three earned, and six hits in five innings.

BREWERS 6, CARDINALS 1

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Willy Adames went 3 of 4 with a homer, double and three RBIs.

Adames hit a two-run double in the third inning and a solo shot in the fifth off Jake Woodford (0-2).

Christian Yelich also had three hits and a solo homer as the Brewers won two of three from the Cardinals in a matchup between the past two NL Central champions.

Brewers starter Freddy Peralta (2-0) struck out seven and gave up one run, four hits and three walks in six innings.

MARLINS 7, METS 2

NEW YORK (AP)—Bryan De La Cruz homered and drove in four runs, and Miami stole five bases.

De La Cruz hit a three-run homer off Carlos Carrasco (0-2) in the first and added a sacrifice fly in the seventh. Garrett Cooper had a two-run shot for the Marlins, who avoided a three-game sweep.

Miami entered with just two stolen bases this season but went 5 for 5 against rookie catcher Francisco Alvarez in his second big league start behind the plate.

Jazz Chisholm Jr. had two hits, two runs, two steals and an RBI before being ejected in the seventh for arguing with plate umpire Jeff Nelson.

Tanner Scott (1-1) worked 1 1/3 hitless innings in relief.

GUARDIANS 7, MARINERS 6

CLEVELAND (AP)—José Ramírez slid past catcher Cal Raleigh’s tag to score the winning run in the 12th in-

ning on Josh Bell’s grounder to second baseman Kolten Wong off Penn Murfee (1-2).

Teoscar Hernández’s two-out single gave the Mariners a 6-5 lead in the top of the 12th, but Seattle’s bullpen faltered again. Cleveland rookie Will Brennan tied the game twice — with a two-out, two-run double in the ninth and an RBI single in the 11th.

Rookie Tim Herrin (1-0) recorded the final out in the 12th for his first major league win.

GIANTS 3, ROYALS 1

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Michael Conforto hit a two-run homer off Ryan Yarbrough (0-1) to cap a three-run rally in the eighth.

John Brebbia (1-0) retired one batter in relief, and Tyler Rogers earned his first save.

Royals starter Kris Bubic struck out nine in six shutout innings of two-hit ball.

ROCKIES 7, NATIONALS 6

DENVER (AP)—Eliás Díaz had three hits, including his first home run this season and Jurickson Profar hit his first home run with Colorado.

Ryan McMahon drew a bases-loaded walk in a four-run sixth for the go-ahead run, allowing the Rockies to gain a four-game split.

Dinelson Lamet (1-0) pitched a scoreless seventh, and Pierce Johnson got three outs for his third save. Yonathan Daza making a diving catch of CJ Abrams’ sinking liner to center for the final out.

Erasmus Ramirez (0-1) was the loser.

DIAMONDBACKS 11, DODGERS 6

PHOENIX (AP)—Josh Rojas had his second straight three-hit game, Pavin Smith drove in three runs and Arizona got 16 hits.

Every starter had at least one hit as the Diamondbacks followed a 12-run, 17-hit effort Saturday with another easy victory and took three out of four in the weekend series. Arizona is 5-3 against the Dodgers this season after Los Angeles went 38-10 against the Diamondbacks over the prior three seasons.

Arizona scored in each of the first five innings, helped by five stolen bases, including two from Nick Ahmed.

Ryne Nelson (1-0) gave up three runs and four hits in six innings of his second start this season. He worked through a shaky first inning and retired his last 11 batters, Michael Grove (0-1) allowed nine runs and 12 hits in 3 1/3 innings.

Jon Rahm rallies to win the Masters as Spanish stars align



AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP)—Jon Rahm kept hearing how he was destined to win

this Masters because so many Spanish stars were aligned in his favor.

Sunday was the birthdate of Seve Ballesteros, his idol and inspiration for playing. This year was the 40-year anniversary of the second Masters title Ballesteros won. If that wasn't enough, caddie Adam Hayes was assigned white coveralls with No. 49—April 9.

"I was told a lot of things about why this could be the year," Rahm said, looking smart as ever in his new green jacket. "And I just didn't want to buy into it too much."

His golf was far more valuable than any historical coincidence.

Rahm turned the longest day into his sweetest victory Sunday. The 30-hole marathon finish started with him trailing by four and ended with a walk up to the 18th green that nearly reduced him to tears, and gave him another major that affirmed him as No. 1 in the world.



Scottie Scheffler puts the green jacket on Jon Rahm, of Spain, after Rahm won the Masters golf tournament at Augusta National Golf Club on Sunday, April 9, 2023, in Augusta, Ga.

He closed with a 3-under 69 to pull away from mistake-prone Brooks Koepka. He won by four shots over Koepka and 52-year-old Phil Mickelson, who matched the low score of the tournament with a 65 and became the oldest runner-up in Masters history.

"We all dream of things like this as players, and you

try to visualize what it's going to be like and what it's going to feel like," Rahm said. "Never thought I was going to cry by winning a golf tournament, but I got very close on that 18th hole."

"And a lot of it because of what it means to me, and to Spanish golf," he said. "It's Spain's 10th major, fourth player to win the Masters. It's pretty incredible."

It was Mickelson who declared Rahm would be among golf's biggest stars even before the Spaniard turned pro in 2016. Rahm now has a green jacket to go along with his

U.S. Open title he won in 2021 at Torrey Pines.

"It was obvious to me at a very young age that he was one of the best players in the world even while he was in college," said Mickelson, whose younger brother was Rahm's college coach at Arizona State. "To see him on this stage is not surprising for anybody."

Rahm made up two shots on Koepka over the final 12 holes of the rain-delayed third round and started the final round two shots behind. He seized on Koepka's collapse and then surged so far ahead that

Mickelson's amazing closing round — it matched the three-time Masters champion's best final round ever at Augusta National — was never going to be enough.

The finish was vintage Rahm. He pulled his drive into the pine trees and it ricocheted out, short of where the fairway starts. No problem. He hit 4-iron toward the green and lofted a pitch to 3 feet to end his round with only one bogey.

"An unusual par, very much a Seve par, a testament to him, and I know he was pulling for me today," said Rahm, who finished at 12-under 276. "And it was a great Sunday."

Rahm embraced his wife and two children, and as he walked toward the scoring room, there was two-time Masters champion José María Olazábal in his green jacket for the strongest hug of all and a few words that included Ballesteros.

"He said he hopes it's the first of many more," Rahm said in Butler Cabin. "We both mentioned something about Seve, and if he had given us 10 more seconds, I think we would have both ended up crying."

Sergio Garcia was the low amateur in 1999 when Olazábal won his second green jacket, and then Garcia won in 2017, the year Rahm made his Masters debut.

Stars aligned, and Rahm played some world-class golf. And to think he began the tournament with a four-putt double bogey on the opening hole.

Rahm won for the fourth time this year—just as Scottie Scheffler did a year ago when he won the Masters—and reclaimed the No. 1 world ranking from Scheffler.

This Masters had a little bit of everything—hot and humid at the start, a cold front with wind that toppled three trees on Friday, putting surfaces saturated from rain on Saturday and a marathon finish Sunday as Rahm and Koepka went 30 holes.

Koepka had one miscue after another, losing the lead for the first time since Thursday afternoon when he chipped 20 feet past the hole from behind the par-3 sixth and made his second bogey. More would follow.

"Just some days you have it, some days you don't, and today wasn't one of those," Koepka said. "But I feel good, and I expect to be there the other three (majors)."

Koepka went 22 consecutive holes Sunday without a birdie—from the par-5 eighth hole in the morning of the third round until the par-5 13th in final round. By then, he was three shots behind and Rahm all but sealed it with his next shot.

BANEZ

From Page 20

and perspective.

As for 67-year-old Banez, who has been a seventh dan black belt for many years now and has almost over 50 years of experience with karate, he said that this is his first international competition since the '70s in the Philippines.

Going into the competition with participants who are probably 20 years his junior, Banez said that he will try his best to bag a podium finish. Even at his older age, he said "I have the spirit. I have confidence to compete."

He said karate is his passion and that he hopes his students will continue with their training—so that's where Diaz comes in. He hopes Diaz will carry on his legacy in the future.

In a working relationship that benefits both parties, Banez teaches Diaz karate skills, while Diaz trains him with strength and conditioning.

As a black belt sensei or instructor, Banez said, "This is one discipline that I can share with everyone who's interested with martial arts, and at the same time, I want to educate most of the youth and the adults to understand martial arts—to understand karate. They think once you practice karate you're going to break bones. It's not true. It depends on who the instructor is."

"It's very important to be a black belt so you will understand and be able to explain every detail into, 'why are you doing this?' 'Why do you practice this?' 'Why do you do it over and over?' That's how to memorize and master it—put it in your head and your heart," he said.

He said the philosophy of Shinkyokushinkai is "to find out and to seek. It's nonstop training, nonstop learning," he said. "Everything that you've learned, every technique that you've learned, think about the counter of that and find out what's the best way. It's a way of life."

AGUON

From Page 20

.727 average; third is the Red Men's Lefty Shiro with a .714 average after 10 hits from 14 at-bats.

The Hotshot's Erica Tenorio is second in batting with five hits out of eight at-bats for a .625 average. The Lady Sufa's Jaylina Borja and the Lady Legal's Pauline Camacho also have a .625 average each.

The runs scored leader in the master's division is Dennis Cruz with 12; Joe Lizama and Robert Bansil have 11 each; and Jaimi Reyes and James Fleming have 10 each.

The doubles leader is James Fleming with five; Dennis Cruz and Tim Wesley have four each; and Eric Cabrera,

Glenn Camacho, Joe Lizama, John Taitano, and Marco Peter all have three each.

Ben Higgins, Dominic Hideo, and Tim Wesley lead the triples with two each, while 10 players are tied with one each.

Joey Dela Cruz has the most home runs with six; followed by four each from Audie Maratita, Manny Sablan, and Robert Bansil; with three each, Kelvin Kapileo and Pat Guerrero have two each.

Dela Cruz also has the most runs batted in (RBIs) with 17; second is Robert Bansil with 13 each; Leo Iskawa has 11; Joe 'Openg' Celis has 10; and Glen Camacho and Kelvin Kapileo have 10 each.

The pitching leaders are Eric David from Tokahao who has played two games, pitched seven innings with

two earned runs, have 15 hits against him, has one win, and has an earned run average (ERA) of two.

Second is Hagu La'mun's Joe Celis who has pitched two games, 12 innings, four earned runs, 11 hits, a 1-1 record, and 2.33 ERA; and third is Paul Salalila from Sufa who has pitched one game, seven innings, three earned runs, 14 hits, one win, and three ERA.

The most strikeouts goes to Henry Reyes with 15; Ken Kaipat has 14; Dominic Hideo and Bruce Laniyo have 13 each; Leo Iskawa has 11; Joe 'Openg' Celis has 10; and Derron Flores has nine.

Back to the women's division, the most runs scored has been posted by Kiana "Baby K" Camacho, Rachel Salalila, and Rayna Deleon Guerrero

with eight each. Bert Camacho, Erica Tenorio, Emy Oiterong, and Pauline Camacho have six each.

Camacho also has the most doubles with three; and Edilyn Benjamin, Jalina Borja, Kianu Aldan, and Sheena Maratita have two each.

Mardina Kaipat has the most triples with two; and Britany Luzama, Janica Lizama, Lem Ogumoro, Rosie Saralu, and Stacy Eno have one each.

Camacho and Salalila have the most home runs with two each; while eight players are tied with one apiece.

Lastly, Camacho has the most RBIs with 10; Janica Lizama has seven; Deleon Guerrero has six; and Benjamin and Salalila have five each.

MICH

From Page 20

conditioned Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

So far, a total of 10 teams have signified their interest in joining the premier men's open basketball league in the CNMI—Bridge Capital LLC, Lakay, New Chang Ming Market, Ol'Aces, Roil Soil

OG, Team Marianas, Rollers, and Kagman.

Lee earlier said the games will be using FIBA rules and regulations and teams are allowed a maximum of 14 players each—with only players 21 years old or older eligible to play—along with three coaches.

Participating teams will be divided into two pools—Pool A and Pool B. Teams in each

pool will play each other in a round-robin affair with the Top 4 teams advancing to a single-elimination format.

Under that crossover format, the top seed in Pool A will take on the fourth seed in Pool B, second seed in Pool A will play the third seed in Pool B, third seed in Pool A will square off against the second seed in Pool B, and the fourth seed in Pool

A will duke it out against the top seed in Pool B. The four surviving teams will then play each other for the two slots in the finals.

As for the prizes, the champion team will receive a much ballyhooed House at MarPac perpetual trophy, \$500 in cash, five cases of Michelob Ultra, and 17 Michelob Ultra diddy bags,

NMIBF earlier said it was

naming the league's MVP the Uncle Paul Shimizu MVP Award.

Shimizu was not only one of MarPac's owners, but also was a former Guam national basketball player, gold medalist, and national coach.

Shimizu, who passed away in March 2021, was the youngest of four siblings born to Ambrosio Shimizu, the founder of Ambros, Inc.,

which owns MarPac.

As such, the player who wins the Uncle Paul Shimizu MVP Award will get an MVP trophy, \$200 cash, a case of Michelob Ultra, a Michelob Ultra cooler, a Michelob Ultra Yeti flask, and other Michelob Ultra gear.

For more information and inquiries, email NMIBF at nmibasketballfederation@gmail.com.



Celtics, Bulls, Nets
win on final day of
NBA regular season

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune Sports

20 TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Jon Rahm rallies to
win the Masters as
Spanish stars align

PAGE 19



Banez, Diaz to compete in Guam karate champs



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Danny Banez, left, and Jerry Diaz are competing in the World Karate Organization Shinkyokushinkai Full Contact Karate Championship in Guam on April 29.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Danny Banez and Jerry Diaz are competing in the World Karate Organization Shinkyokushinkai Full Contact Karate Championship in Guam on April 29.



Banez, is a black belt and sensei at his karate studio Kyo-kushinkai Karate Watanabe Dojo, and Diaz is a blue belt and a personal trainer. Both will be competing in the senior men open weight division for ages 40 and older.

Kyokushin is a style of karate originating in Japan. It is a style of stand-up fighting and is rooted in a philosophy of self-improvement, discipline, and hard training.

Along with Banez and Diaz are probably about seven students from Banez's dojo that will compete in the competition too. Afterwards, they will attend the Skills Training Review/ Seminar on April 30.

Diaz has been training under the tutelage of Banez since last September and said "it was brutal and grueling in the beginning... However, during our belt promotion, I was honored to receive the blue belt to move on to more intermediate karate skills that includes sparring with control, counter strike, and complex kata movements."

About how he felt headed into the competition, he said "I am nervous and enthusiastically excited at the same time. I never imagined competing in any martial arts tournament, specifically with karate. I do have preparation in the view of a coach and fitness trainer

from Kelvin 'The Big Hit' Fitial when preparing for the main event competition on Saipan, Guam, and Australia."

When asked if he's ready, he said "Preparation for the unexpected is a highly stressful experience. However, this is the motivational feeling of asking myself 'Why would I do this?' Putting myself in this mindset to experience this competition helps me prepare and in the future when I become a black belt level instructor, I can share my experience with our youth and community, including my fitness clients looking into learning about karate. It's all about the mindset, purpose,

See BANEZ on Page 19

'Mich' Ultra Cup technical meeting today



NMIBF
The CNMI's top basketball players will see action in the 2023 "Mich" Ultra Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League, which is set to unfurl at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation and MarPac are calling on all interested teams to attend the technical meeting for the 2023 "Mich" Ultra Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball set for 5:30pm today, April 11, at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium confer-

ence room.

NMIBF president James Lee said all representatives of interested teams are required to attend the meeting as pertinent details of the league will be discussed.

The 2023 "Mich" Ultra Cup will make its much-anticipated opening on April 18 at the newly renovated and fully air-

See MICH on Page 19

Aguon, Camacho are top hitters in BASA



LEIGH GASES
Kiana "Baby K" Camacho from the Lady Blue Jays is the top hitter in the women's division of the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League as of April 2.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



Derrick Aguon from Wazzup and Kiana "Baby K" Camacho from the Lady Blue Jays are the top hitters in the master's and women's divisions of the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League as of April 2.

Out of Aguon's 22 at-bats, he had 16 hits for a batting average of .727, while Camacho had 11 hits out of 15 at bats for a .733 average.

Second to Aguon is Hagu La'mun's Kelvin Kapileo with 8 out of 11 hits for a

See AGUON on Page 19